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The US Commitment to NATO in the Post-Cold War Period

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Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy in Politics

School of Government and International Affairs

Durham University

2014

Declaration

The work is solely that of the author, Yanan Song, under the supervision of Prof. John Dumbrell and Dr. Christian Schweiger.

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Acknowledgement

First and foremost, I would love to thank my supervisors, Prof. John Dumbrell and Dr. Christian Schweiger, for their advice, guidance and encouragement throughout this long journey. To Prof. John Dumbrell I owe a particular debt of gratitude. It is by his guidance that I move step by step forward. His input has been essential not only in guiding me through the PhD process, but also in making me a real researcher. I could not have asked for a better supervisor.

This research would not have been successful without the invaluable contributions of those experts I met during fieldwork. Special thanks go to Robert Litwak who recommended many interesting projects in the US to me. I would also like to thank Prof. George Joffe for his countless suggestions on how to further my research.

The PhD has not been a lonely journey as my parents and my brother were always there to support me. They have always respected my decisions and cared about my feelings. Whenever I felt frustrated, they were willing to listen. The comfort they provided was always gentle and timely. For this, I will be forever grateful.

Abstract

The geopolitical conditions which led to the creation of NATO in 1949 rapidly disappeared following the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. The possibility of the termination of institutionalised US support for European security was seriously raised in this period, as was the possibility of NATO ceasing to exist. However, after progressive transformation, NATO expanded rather than disbanded. It went on to participate in ‘out of area’ actions. All these commitments were accompanied by debates about the purpose of NATO. Relevant debates included continuing tensions between Washington and European capitals over defence spending levels; accusations that the US was using NATO as an instrument of extra-United Nations unilateral power; the preference of Washington immediately after 9/11 for working through *ad hoc* rather than institutionalised alliance structures; and the developing relationship between NATO and Russia.

This research seeks to explain the continuing US commitment to NATO in the post-Cold War era. The initial focus is on the recommitment decisions of the Clinton administration. It also researches in some depth the operations in Kosovo and, in particular, Libya. The case study on Libya is especially important in exploring the Obama administration’s understanding of the purpose of NATO in the context of current economic pressures, domestic US debates about post-War on Terror interventions, and of increasing American preoccupation with Pacific rather than European security. In the light of NATO operations in the post-Cold War era and the recent Syrian and Ukrainian crises, the study argues that the US has always been committed to NATO due to the unique value of NATO; the US overall foreign policy preference for NATO; and internal bureaucratic compromise on NATO. But the US may suspend its support to the Alliance in the future if the inherent problem of burden-sharing is not seriously treated by the European members.

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List of Abbreviations

ANSF	Afghan National Security Force
AFRICOM	US Africa Command
ACTWARN	Activation Warning
ACTORD	Activation Order
Av-Det	Air Force Aviation Detachment
CPG	Comprehensive Political Guidance
CJTF	Combined Joint Task Forces
CSCE	Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe
DCI	Defence Capabilities Initiative
EU	European Union
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
FPA	Foreign Policy Analysis
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
HATs	Humanitarian Assessment Teams
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICISS	International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty
KPJ	Communist Party of Yugoslavia
KLA	Kosovo Liberation Army
KVM	Kosovo Verifying Mission
LIFG	Libyan Islamic Fighting Group
LNC	National Liberation Movement
LCY	League of Communist
LDK	Democratic League of Kosovo
MAP	Membership Action Plan
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NACC	North Atlantic Cooperation Council
NRF	NATO Response Force
NTM-A	NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan
NSS	National Security Strategy
NSC	National Security Council

NOP	Libya's National Oil Corporation
OAF	Operation Allied Force
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
OOD	Operation Odyssey Dawn
OUP	Operation Unified Protector
OIC	Organisation of the Islamic Conference
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PfP	Partnership for Peace
PRTs	Provincial Reconstruction Teams
QDR	Quadrennial Defence Review
R2P	Responsibility to Protect
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
TNC	Transitional National Council
UN	United Nations
USFOR-A	US Force Afghanistan
USAID	US Agency for International Development
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
WTO	World Trade Organisation
WWII	World War Two
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction
XFOR	Extraction Force

Chapter 1: Introduction

The geopolitical conditions which led to the creation of NATO in 1949 rapidly disappeared following the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. According to neorealism, if alignment is formed because of threat, it will falter in the absence of a threat. Scholars like John Mearsheimer and Kenneth Waltz even predicted that without the Soviet threat, NATO would cease to be a durable alliance.¹ The ending of the Cold War unlocked a period of profound soul-searching within the Alliance. The new conditions indeed led to an American rethinking of the US commitment to NATO, just as it led to a refocusing of priorities within European members of the Alliance. In May 1990, NATO's Military Committee announced that it no longer considered the Warsaw Pact a threat to the Alliance. President George H.W. Bush then called for spending cuts which would eventually result in significant reductions in funding and force levels for NATO's conventional and nuclear forces. He also proclaimed the emergence of a 'New World Order', suggesting that NATO was bereft of a strategic anchor. In addition, President Francois Mitterrand of France and Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany delivered a Franco-German statement on joint defence policies in late 1991, the provisions of which facilitated the formation of the Eurocorps on May 22, 1992.² This symbolic gesture was even interpreted by some observers as indicating that the two leaders hoped to replace NATO with a European defence 'identity' as Europe's primary security apparatus.³ In short, the possibility of the termination of institutionalised US support for European security was seriously raised in this period, as was the possibility of NATO ceasing to exist.

¹ John Mearsheimer (1990) 'Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War', *International Security*, Vol. 15, No. 4, p. 52. See Kenneth Waltz's testimony quoted in Gunther Hellmann and Reinhard Wolf (1993) 'Neo-realism, Neo-liberal Institutionalism, and the Future of NATO', *Security Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 1, p. 17.

² Ted Galen Carpenter (1994) *Beyond NATO: Staying Out of Europe's Wars*, Washington: Cato Institute, p. 131. Andrew Rosenthal (1991) 'For Bush, NATO Talks May Test His Strategy', *The New York Times*, 06 November.

³ Siret Huersoy (2002) *The New Security Concept and German-French Approaches to the European 'Pillar of Defence', 1990-2002*, Marburg: Tectum Verlag, p. 174.

1.1 The survival of NATO

Following major debates about the appropriate direction for post-Cold War American internationalism, the administration of President Bill Clinton not only committed itself to the continuation of NATO, but also began to sponsor a major programme of NATO renewal and enlargement. After progressive transformation, NATO expanded rather than disbanded. It went on to participate in ‘out of area’ action in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Libya. It developed a set of more or less concerted doctrine regarding ‘new threats’, and broadened the function of NATO to include effective mechanisms for solving disputes and coordinating foreign and political policies instead of strictly focusing on military responses.⁴ All these commitments were accompanied by major debates about the purpose and capabilities of NATO. Relevant debates included continuing tensions between Washington and European capitals over defence spending levels; accusations that the US was using NATO as an instrument of extra-United Nations unilateral power; especially the preference of Washington immediately after 9/11 for working through *ad hoc* rather than institutionalised alliance structures; and the developing relationship between NATO and Russia (particularly in the context of possible Georgian and Ukrainian membership of the organisation). However, NATO continued to exist and Washington remained formally committed to the defence of Europe. The recent history of the US commitment has been dominated by economic pressures, squabbles over NATO’s military performance in Afghanistan, and the apparent American preference for ‘leading from behind’ in Libya. The current tensions within NATO were graphically expressed in retiring Defence Secretary Robert Gates’ June 2011 speech, ‘Reflections on the Status and Future of the Transatlantic Alliance’:

*In the past, I’ve worried openly about NATO turning into a two-tiered alliance, between members who specialise in ‘soft’ humanitarian development, peacekeeping, and talking tasks, and those conducting the ‘hard’ combat missions...This is no longer a hypothetical worry. We are there today. And it is unacceptable.*⁵

⁴ Douglas Stuart (1993) ‘NATO’s Future as a Pan-European Security Institution’, *NATO Review*, Vol. 41, No. 4. Also see ‘A Political and Military Alliance’, NATO.

⁵ Robert Gates (2011) ‘Reflections on the Status and Future of the Transatlantic Alliance’.

But no matter how complicated the history of NATO debates has been, there was always a consensus on the fact that the US attitude was most crucial to the survival as well as continued existence of NATO.

1.2 Research question

Looking back on the period since the end of the Cold War, Washington was more than once expected to support NATO dissolution: when the Soviet threat subsided; when US decision on bypassing NATO was announced after 9/11; when NATO demonstrated its incapability to assume the overall responsibility for all military operations in Afghanistan; when the US insistence on ‘leading from behind’ in Libya became conspicuous. Nevertheless, by 2011 when the Libyan crisis subsided, NATO had remained for 20 of the most eventful and challenging years in the post-Cold War history, regardless of how frequently NATO was relegated to the very margins of debate. This interesting phenomenon raised a question: why did the US remain committed to NATO in the post-Cold War period? This becomes the central question of this study, but to be more analytical, the author further outlines several sub-questions to guide the research. All those specific questions are addressed in the following chapters respectively.

In the immediate aftermath of the Cold War, Americans had high expectations of seeing the US scaling down its international commitments. They believed that there was no need to continue the institutionalised protection for European security, and that it was time to focus on domestic affairs. With respect to this domestic demand, why did the Clinton administration nonetheless choose the opposite course: to remain committed to NATO and to support NATO enlargement? Moreover, NATO not only expanded its membership, but also participated in ‘out-of-area’ actions, which were regarded as ‘the most visible manifestation of NATO’s development in the post-Cold War period’.⁶ Kosovo was basically a NATO operation, though 80% of its tasks were completed by the US. Hence why did the US support the Kosovo mission to be accomplished under the framework of NATO? On the contrary, Afghanistan at first

⁶ Mark Webber, Ellen Hallams and Martin Smith (2014) ‘Repairing NATO’s Motors’, *International Affairs*, Vol. 90, No. 4, p. 782.

saw the US declining to work through NATO. Why did the Bush administration prefer an *ad hoc* coalition to the institutionalised alliance? If Afghanistan suggested a change of US attitude toward NATO, why would the Alliance be able to continue with second and third rounds of enlargement in 2004 and 2008 respectively? Anyway, since NATO had gone through more transformation and expansion after Afghanistan, there was a great hope for the Alliance to shoulder more responsibilities. Whereas when the Libyan crisis came along, the US was reluctant to intervene at the very beginning, not to mention to utilise NATO to conduct the mission immediately. Why did the US hesitate to initiate military actions against Libyan military targets, given that the US had always played a dominant role in carrying out operations? Although the US then joined its allies, it quickly transferred the Libyan mission to NATO and started ‘leading from behind’. Thus in terms of how the US anomalously behaved, did Libya imply a new ‘American way of war’? Furthermore, the contribution from other NATO members to the Libyan mission was still quite small: ‘less than half have participated, and fewer than a third have been willing to participate in the strike mission’.⁷ As a result, Libya pushed the ‘burden-sharing’ debate to another climax. Would NATO remain useful to the US, given that task divisions between Washington and European capitals remained unequal?

As the crisis in Syria deteriorated in the summer of 2013, the US not only hesitated to intervene, but was unprecedentedly uncertain about whether to resort to NATO, the highly controversial alignment that served as the main though sometimes inefficient mechanism to resolve conflicts in the past. The plan to wrest chemical weapons from Syria offered Washington a buffer against tremendous pressure on intervention, but it could not assure that military action would be forever unlikely. If a missile strike on the Assad regime became the only option, would the Obama administration agree to conduct military operations under the framework of NATO, taking into account the increasing US consciousness about working with allies? Moreover, the Ukrainian crisis recently showed that NATO reverting to its original purpose: to contain Russia. Yet on the other hand, President Putin is believed to be testing what NATO can do. The irony is that even though the candidate of NATO is threatened, so far NATO has done very little. Hence as Ian Bond, the director of foreign policy at the Centre for

⁷ Robert Gates (2011).

European Reform said, Russia's annexation of Crimea questions about the Alliance's options and ability to act: 'Putin has just given NATO something to do, but the question is whether NATO is up to it.'⁸ This again puts forward the question: will the US remain committed to NATO? If yes, what role should NATO play, a global alliance or an alliance with global partners?

1.3 Research outline

This research mainly seeks to explain the continuing US commitments to NATO in the post-Cold War era. The initial focus is on the recommitment decisions of the Clinton administration. The author has also researched in some depth the operations in Kosovo, Afghanistan and, in particular, Libya. The case study on Libya is especially important in exploring the Obama administration's understanding of the purpose of NATO in the context of current economic pressures, domestic US debates about post-War on Terror interventions, and of increasing American preoccupation with Pacific rather than European security. Libya is apparently one of the author's contributions, as so far there has not been much work on the Libyan mission. James Mann, Francois Heisbourg, Martin Indyk and Luca Tardelli all mention the Libyan operation in their work, but neither treats it as a detailed case study. In general, this research aims to contribute to the literature on the US commitment to NATO. The majority literature on the subject of NATO has been on European side, not American foreign policy side, so the author chooses to do the research mainly from US foreign policy perspective. Specifically, the combination of realism and liberal internationalism serves as the overarching theoretical framework to explain US foreign policy as a whole, as historically, US decision-making on international intervention has been greatly influenced by the debate over the relationship between self-interest and universal values like democracy, freedom and human rights. Additionally Alliance Theory is applied to address why NATO has persisted after the Soviet threat subsided and why more powerful countries would like to cooperate with less powerful countries. On the micro level, this research adopts a 'Foreign Policy Analysis' focus, with particular emphasis on intra-US administration bureaucratic

⁸ Steven Erlanger (2014) 'Russian Aggression puts NATO in Spotlight', *The New York Times*, 18 March.

politics. The ‘pulling and hauling’ among players is vital to understand why the US pursues certain foreign policy, who might influence it, and how it is conceived.

Chapter Two outlines the literature, methodology and historical background. The literature review mainly focuses on the debate over the role, purpose and utility of the Alliance; the Clinton administration’s commitment to NATO expansion; and NATO’s ‘out-of-area’ operations in Kosovo, Afghanistan and Libya. For the methodology, basically the research is a qualitative one, which enables the author to adopt both the case study and interview approaches. Three cases including the Clinton administration’s commitment to NATO expansion, NATO’s engagement in Kosovo, and NATO’s engagement in Libya are selected to test why America remained committed to NATO in the post-Cold War period. Additionally, in order to incorporate more primary resources into this work, the author conducted a programme of interviews in Washington D. C. in 2012. Chapter Three outlines theoretical frameworks that are applied to the research. The introduction of theoretical frameworks contains Alliance Theory; the explanation of US foreign policy according to interaction between realism and liberal internationalism; and Foreign Policy Analysis, especially the Bureaucratic Politics Model. Alliance Theory is used to explain why NATO persists in the post-Cold War era, rather than disappearing due to the lack of the Soviet threat. The latter two theoretical frameworks are both important to analyse how the US makes policy on NATO. To be specific, interaction between realism and liberal internationalism is useful to comprehend the traditional approach of US foreign policy-making at the macro level, while the Bureaucratic Politics Model provides a more detailed understanding of the decision-making process at the micro level.

Chapter Four introduces the debate over NATO’s persistence immediately after the end of the Cold War, focusing on the Clinton administration’s commitment to NATO expansion. Specifically, this chapter mainly analyses why, how and when NATO expanded in the post-Cold War era, and which countries could gain the membership of NATO in the first place. Chapters Five and Six address NATO’s engagement in and after Kosovo respectively, which demonstrated the strength of the Alliance deriving from its institutional structure while underlining intra-alignment disputes

about the capabilities and relevance of NATO. The Kosovo mission was chosen as a case study, for it was the first test of a newly transformed NATO immediately after the end of the Cold War. But the Afghan mission, which was NATO's major military engagement after Kosovo, is not dealt with according to the case study approach. One apparent reason is that Afghanistan is still an ongoing mission, meaning there is no final judgment about this operation. In comparison, Kosovo was a completed case, thereby it was appropriate to draw a conclusion on the Kosovo mission. The case of Afghanistan is far more problematic and complex, both in terms of the nature and effect of allied military withdrawal.

Chapters Seven and Eight, as the major part of the thesis, provide an overview of the Libyan operation, concentrating on why the US was reluctant to intervene in Libya at the very beginning, why it changed its mind to join the operation later, and why it decided to transfer the Libyan mission to NATO and adopted the strategy of 'leading from behind'. The final chapter discusses the contemporary debate over the US commitment to NATO in the context of the growing burden-sharing problems within the Alliance, unambiguous US policy of 'Pivot to Asia', the potential US decision on bypassing NATO to resolve the crisis of Syria, and the possible utilisation of NATO to contain Russia in the case of Ukraine.

Chapter 2: Literature Review, Methodology and Historical Background

2.1 Literature review

It is now 65 years since the creation of NATO, leading to a political and military alliance that has been committed to safeguarding the freedom and security of its members. However, throughout the history of the Alliance, NATO has more than once been forecast to disappear. 25 years ago when the Soviet threat subsided following the fall of the Berlin Wall, NATO was about to cease to exist, as there was no longer a common threat to its member states. Kenneth Waltz was among the first to predict the Alliance's imminent demise in the absence of an overriding security threat.¹ He got support from those who called for the US to scale down its international commitment after the end of the Cold War. But the Clinton administration soon committed itself to the continuation of NATO, bringing the transformation of NATO on to the agenda.² The Alliance, according to James Goldgeier, then faced a daunting task: 'how to reach out to former members of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation and help them integrate into the prosperous and peaceful Western order'.³ In *Not Whether But When*, Goldgeier focused on how the Clinton administration actually developed NATO enlargement into American policy rather than simply introducing proponents and opponents' arguments about NATO expansion. The major feature of this book refers to the analysis of the inner workings of the foreign policy bureaucracy. With regard to this, Philip Zelikow comments that Goldgeier tends to treat midlevel bureaucrats as the heroes in the story, which

¹ Kenneth Waltz (1993) 'Structural Realism After the Cold War', *International Security*, Vol. 25, No. 1, pp. 5-41.

² For discussion about whether Clinton managed to develop an American foreign policy approach that was appropriate for the domestic and international conditions of the post-Cold War era, see John Dumbrell (2009) *Clinton's Foreign Policy: Between the Bushes, 1992-2000*, London: Routledge; Cecil V. Crabb, Leila E. Saredine and Glenn J. Antizzo (2001) *Charting a New Diplomatic Course: Alternative Approaches to America's Post-Cold War Foreign Policy*, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press.

³ James M. Goldgeier (1999) *Not Whether But When: The US Decision to Enlarge NATO*, Washington: Brookings Institution Press. For discussion about how NATO expanded to include Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, also see George W. Grayson (1999) *Strange Bedfellows: NATO Marches East*, Lanham: University Press of America.

inappropriately shifts the focus from international politics to American interagency arguments. It was true that once Clinton was committed, there were few ways the initiative could go wrong, yet the interaction among different branches of government was the key to making NATO expansion a priority for the President.

If Goldgeier gives the picture of NATO enlargement from the perspective of an ‘outsider’; Ronald Asmus analyses the process as a real ‘insider’, as he was a principal aide to Madeleine Albright and Strobe Talbott during the Clinton administration. In his *Opening NATO’s Door*, Asmus focused on the fierce divisions within the administration about how to reconcile the wish of the Eastern European countries to be part of a reunited Europe.⁴ In terms of NATO’s new role, Asmus emphasises the cautions of allies and the changes of mood in Russia. Although he writes about NATO’s ‘out-of-area’ operations in Yugoslavia, Asmus, according to Stanley Hoffmann, does not mention much about how the Alliance was internally divided over the Kosovo campaign. Actually since the adoption of the 1991 ‘New Strategic Concept’, NATO began to go ‘out-of-area’ to prevent crises from escalating in Kosovo, Afghanistan and Libya. The Kosovo mission was regarded as the first test of a newly transformed NATO immediately after the end of the Cold War, which dispelled the rumour that the US was going to abandon the Alliance, whereas scholars like John R. Deni, James Sperling, Mark Webber, Derek Chollet, James Goldgeier and Sean Kay argue that NATO in fact proved ill-equipped to operate in the case of Kosovo, given many of the frictions among NATO members highly decreased the US operational freedom and flexibility as well as the efficacy of the Alliance as a whole.⁵ The Kosovo operation therefore led to a debate over the relevance of NATO, which indirectly encouraged the Bush administration to bypass NATO after 9/11.⁶ The Alliance was once again being brought to the edge of breakup.

⁴ Ronald D. Asmus (2002) *Opening NATO’s Door: How the Alliance Remade Itself for a New Era*, New York: Columbia University Press. Also see the memoir of the former Secretary of State: Madeleine K. Albright (2003) *Madam Secretary: A Memoir*, New York: Miramax Books.

⁵ John R. Deni (2007) *Alliance Management and Maintenance: Restructuring NATO for the 21st Century*, Aldershot: Ashgate. James Sperling and Mark Webber (2009) ‘NATO: from Kosovo to Kabul’, *International Affairs*, Vol. 85, No. 3, pp. 491-511. Derek Chollet and James Goldgeier (2008) *America Between the Wars: From 11/9 to 9/11*, New York: PublicAffairs. Sean Kay (1998) *NATO and the Future of European Security*, Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.

⁶ For more discussion about the decision-making of the Bush administration in the case of Afghanistan, see President Bush’s memoir: George W. Bush (2011) *Decision Points*, Croydon: Virgin Books; the memoir of Secretary of Defence under President George W. Bush: Dick Cheney (2011) *In My Time: A*

Ellen Hallams examines US attitudes to NATO following 9/11 in *The United States and NATO since 9/11: The Transatlantic Alliance Renewed*.⁷ She believes that, although the Bush administration understood that alliance unity was precarious at times, they recognised there were core benefits to be gained from utilising the institutional structures and military capabilities of NATO. As the Alliance has made incomparable contributions to post-combat reconstruction and stabilisation operations in both Afghanistan and Iraq, the US should remain committed to NATO. The work also systematically introduces NATO transformation from the 1991 Rome Summit to the 2002 Prague Summit, concluding that the US is the very engine driving NATO forward, and it will remain committed to the Alliance as long as European allies change to share more responsibilities. As her focus is on the US attitude to NATO, Hallams does not go further to discuss the transatlantic interactions in detail, not to mention to address the question of how the relationship between the US and its NATO allies should develop. Jussi Hanhimäki, Benedikt Schoenborn and Barbara Zanchetta fill this gap by paying more attention to how the transatlantic relations were created, extended, and multiplied ever since the defeat of Nazi Germany.⁸ Their *Transatlantic Relations Since 1945*, together with Hallams' book, give insights into the future of NATO especially after the launch of the controversial US-led 'War on Terror'.

9/11 marked the advent of a new era in terms of new security challenges. The legacy of the Bush administration made the questions difficult but vital about whether the Obama administration has been able to issue appropriate foreign policies to counter potential threats and to make changes for the better in US relations with the wider world. Martin Indyk, Kenneth Libenthal and Michael O'Hanlon pay attention to how President Obama chose reasonable foreign policies and whether he is able to change the climate of Washington that was previously influenced by Bush's unilateralist militarism.⁹ Robert Singh is interested in the same topic. In his *Barack Obama's Post-*

Personal and Political Memoir, New York: Threshold Editions and the memoir of former National Security Adviser and Secretary of State: Condoleezza Rice (2011) *No Higher Honour: A Memoir of My Years in Washington*, London: Simon and Schuster.

⁷Ellen Hallams (2010) *The United States and NATO since 9/11: the Transatlantic Alliance Renewed*, London: Routledge.

⁸ Jussi Hanhimäki, Benedikt Schoenborn and Barbara Zanchetta (2012) *Transatlantic Relations Since 1945: An Introduction*, London: Routledge.

⁹ Martin Indyk, Kenneth Libenthal and Michael O'Hanlon (2012) *Bending History: Barack Obama's*

American Foreign Policy, Singh argues that Obama's approach of 'strategic engagement' was appropriate for a new era of constrained internationalism, though it has yielded modest results.

More importantly, 9/11 also provoked a new round of debate over the purpose of NATO. *NATO Beyond 9/11* comprehensively explores the significance of 9/11 for the transformation of the Alliance over the last decade.¹⁰ The authors aim to understand whether 9/11 represents a major transformative event for NATO that has long been grappled with the implications of the end of the Cold War. As the continuation of Hallams and Hanhimäki *et al.*'s story, this work adds examination of more recent topics including NATO's poor performance in Afghanistan, the Libyan mission, global partnership, burden-sharing mechanisms, and the Russian threat.¹¹ Erwan Lagadec also provides an overview of what happened to transatlantic relations in the early 21st century, but concentrating more on whether the US still remains as an 'indispensable' and 'intolerable' nation in Europe.¹² On the other hand, instead of talking about the general transatlantic interactions, Bob Woodward narrows his view down on the 'Obama's wars', questioning whether a president's advisers and decision-making process are responsive to his conception of strategy.¹³ This work is accused of focusing too narrowly on the inside Washington game. But according to most scholars who study US policy-making, the first and foremost factor they should always consider is internal interactions among different bureaucrats. With regard to this, Robert Gates' memoir *Duty: Memoirs of a Secretary of War* is a valuable source, as it provides more details about the Obama administration's growing frustration with US policy on Afghanistan.¹⁴ David Auerswald and Stephen Saideman also see the

Foreign Policy, Washington: Brookings Institution Press.

¹⁰ Ellen Hallams, Luca Ratti and Ben Zyla (2013) *NATO Beyond 9/11: The Transformation of the Atlantic Alliance*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

¹¹ For more discussion about the recent relationship between the US and Russia, see Andrei Shleifer and Daniel Treisman (2011) 'Why Moscow Says No: A Question of Russian Interests, Not Psychology', *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2011 Issue and Angela Stent (2014) *The Limits of Partnership: US-Russian Relations in the Twenty-First Century*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

¹² Erwan Lagadec (2013) *Transatlantic Relations in the 21st Century: Europe, America and the Rise of the Rest*, London: Routledge.

¹³ Bob Woodward (2010) *Obama's Wars*, New York: Simon and Schuster. For more recent discussion about the Afghan war, see Carter Malkasian (2013) *War Comes to Garmser: Thirty Years of Conflict on the Afghan Frontier*, New York: Oxford University Press.

¹⁴ Robert Gates (2014) *Duty: Memoirs of a Secretary at War*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf. The US policy on Afghanistan is further questioned by Carlotta Gall, who accuses Washington of fighting 'the wrong enemy'. According to Gall, Pakistan is 'perfidious, driving the violence in Afghanistan for its

Afghan war through the lens of bureaucratic politics, yet expand the scope to include other participating countries in addition to the US. After conducting more than 250 interviews with senior officials, they find that domestic constraints in presidential and parliamentary systems place great influence on decision-making.¹⁵ If Woodward offers a remarkable early glimpse of Obama's wars, James Mann picks up the banner and carries it a step further toward the most recent Obama's war: Libya.¹⁶

Early in 2011, the Libyan crisis escalated, proposing another test for NATO that has undergone further transformation since the 2010 Lisbon Summit. The US has always played a dominant role in carrying out international interventions in regional conflicts, but in the case of Libya, the US apparently hesitated to unfold military operations against Libyan military targets. It seems to be the first time that the US followed rather than led its European allies to a campaign. Although the US eventually decided to participate, it announced the decision to transfer the Libyan mission to NATO immediately after the campaign. To understand why the US preferred 'leading from behind' in Libya, James Mann analyses the events, ideas, personalities and conflicts that have defined Obama's foreign policy. The *Obamians* mainly adopted the same approach as Woodward, telling the compelling story of internal conflicts among those who could either directly or indirectly shape the policy-making of the Obama administration including the President, Robert Gates, Hillary Clinton and Joseph Biden. Libya was seen as an important case to discover as well as predict the Alliance evolution because it again revealed the inherent problem between the US and its European allies within NATO. With the US withdrawing from Afghanistan and reducing its role in the Alliance, Francois Heisbourg *et al.* argue in *All Alone? What US Retrenchment Means for Europe and NATO* that the Alliance will not be able to continue unless the Europeans begin to assume more military responsibility.¹⁷ Graeme

own cynical, hegemonic reasons'. However, as Shamila Chaudhary argued, Gall's work oversimplifies the psychology of Pakistan's relations with the Taliban and distracts from the real question at hand: Why does Pakistan want to influence Afghanistan. See Carlotta Gall (2014) *The Wrong Enemy: America in Afghanistan 2001-2014*, New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt and Shamila Chaudhary (2014) "'The Wrong Enemy: America in Afghanistan, 2001-2014'" by Carlotta Gall, *The Washington Post*, 18 April.

¹⁵ David Auerswald and Stephen Saideman (2014) *NATO in Afghanistan: Fighting Together, Fighting Alone*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

¹⁶ James Mann (2012) *The Obamians: The Struggle Inside the White House to Redefine American Power*, New York: Viking.

¹⁷ Francois Heisbourg, Wolfgang Ischinger, George Robertson, Kori Schake and Tomas Valasek (ed.) (2012) *All Alone? What US Retrenchment Means for Europe and NATO*, Centre for European Reform.

Herd and John Kriendler further discuss the existing strategic debates over the direction and scope of NATO's potential evolution.¹⁸ Specifically, they assess the Alliance's role, purpose and utility in the context of a US strategic pivot in a 'Pacific Century'.¹⁹ This work comes to a similar conclusion that NATO needs more transformation in order to adapt to the changing global security environment that is characterised by the proliferation of ballistic missiles, nuclear weapons and WMDs, terrorism, cyber attacks and fundamental environmental problems.

The debates over the purpose of NATO have never stopped since the end of the Cold War. Many scholars have addressed NATO's 'out-of-area' operations especially in Kosovo and Afghanistan, the legacy of which acknowledges US commitment to NATO on one hand, and underlines the urgency of NATO transformation on the other. Yet so far, not much literature has focused on the implication of the Libyan war to NATO, making it hard to conclude whether the US will remain committed to NATO in the future. Therefore this thesis aims to complete the whole story of US attitudes to NATO in the post-Cold War era by analysing in some depth the operations in Kosovo, Afghanistan and in particular Libya, hoping to make some contributions to the literature on US commitment to the transatlantic alliance.

2.2 Methodology

The goal of the research is to find out key factors that led to a particular policy outcome. Having identified the research topic, specified its scope and developed theoretical frameworks, this section focuses on how to conduct the research. First of all, it is necessary to clarify key propositions and key variables, the measurement of which determines the research approach. Then the research approach will be introduced in detail, focusing on 'why' and 'how' this approach is adopted. Finally,

For more discussion about US retrenchment, see Joseph M. Parent and Paul K. MacDonald (2011) 'The Wisdom of Retrenchment: America Must Cut Back to Move Forward', *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2011 Issue.

¹⁸ Graeme Herd and John Kriendler (2012) *Understanding NATO in the 21st Century: Alliance Strategies, Security and Global Governance*, London: Routledge.

¹⁹ For more discussion about 'pivot to Asia' and the rise of China, see Richard Rosecrance (2013) *The Resurgence of the West: How a Transatlantic Union Can Prevent War and Restore The United States and Europe*, New Haven: Yale University Press.

data collection especially the method of interviewing and data analysis will be discussed.

2.2.1 Key propositions and key variables

P1: The US recognition of NATO as a unique alliance that member states share common values in addition to common interests, led to US commitment to NATO in the post-Cold War period.

P2: The historical tradition that US foreign policy has always been made according to interactions between realism and liberal internationalism, exerted great influence on US decision-making over its commitment to NATO in the post-Cold War period.

P3: The ‘pulling and hauling’ among players positioned hierarchically within the government, including the President, the White House, the Congress and the Pentagon, played an important role in confirming US commitment to NATO in the post-Cold War period.

The dependent variable (DV) is the US decision to remain committed to NATO in the post-Cold War period. The key independent variables (IVs) are the US assessment of the purpose of NATO; the influence coming from traditional US decision-making format; and the practice of the US bureaucratic politics. The DV is assessed by looking at both the US support for NATO enlargement and the US decision to work under the framework of NATO in ‘out-of-area’ operations. The IVs are assessed by analysing both the general foreign policy doctrines and specific issue-guided decision-makings of the Clinton administration, the Bush administration and the Obama administration.

2.2.2 Research approach

As it should in any sound research design, the nature of the research question and the data that is available drives the approach. The research is primarily a non-

experimental one, in which a researcher observes a phenomenon without manipulating the independent variables. Hence it is based on a qualitative approach which is often used for policy and programme evaluation research because it can answer certain important questions more efficiently and effectively than quantitative approaches.²⁰ In other words, a qualitative research method is particularly adopted for understanding how and why certain outcomes were achieved, not just what was achieved. This approach is consistent with the existing research on US foreign policy, much of which is also qualitative.

Specifically, the research adopts the case study methodology, ‘an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context’.²¹ Ritchie and Lewis see the primary defining features of a case study as being ‘multiplicity of perspectives which are rooted in a specific context’.²² Merriam further identifies four essential characteristics of a case study: particularistic, descriptive, heuristic, and inductive.²³ As a result, by doing case studies, the researcher may gain a sharpened understanding of why the instance happened as it did, and what might become important to look at more extensively in future research.²⁴

As multiple-case designs are preferred over single-case designs, this research generally selects three cases, namely the Clinton administration’s commitment to NATO expansion, NATO’s engagement in Kosovo, and NATO’s engagement in Libya.²⁵ It aims to examine several cases across the time frame of the study to discover as well as explain why certain decisions were made. By analysing these cases, this research addresses almost all key issues relevant to NATO in the post-Cold War period, which highly enhances the *reliability* of the study.²⁶ But on the other

²⁰ Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (ed.) (2011) *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 4th ed., Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

²¹ Robert K. Yin (2003) ‘Case Study Research: Design and Methods’, *Applied Social Research Methods Series*, Vol. 5, 3rd ed., Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, p. 13.

²² Jane Ritchie and Jane Lewis (2003) *Qualitative Research Practice: A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers*, London: Sage Publications, p. 52.

²³ Sharan B. Merriam (1991) *Case Study Research in Education: A Qualitative Approach*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

²⁴ Bent Flyvbjerg (2006) ‘Five Misunderstandings About Case-Study Research’, *Qualitative Inquiry*, Vol. 12, No. 2, pp. 219-245.

²⁵ Robert K. Yin (2003).

²⁶ Qualitative research approaches need to provide findings with great reliability, which refers to the extent to which a measure is consistently accurate. See Jerome Kirk and Marc L. Miller (1986)

hand, these cases are not supposed to be treated equally, not only because of the limited time and access for fieldwork, but also due to the selection criteria of cases. The first criterion should be to maximise what we can learn, as the underlying philosophy of case studies are 'not to prove but to improve'.²⁷ Indeed, this research seeks to improve the understanding of why the US decision to remain committed to NATO in the post-Cold War period was made, which might then shed light on the future of the Alliance. Robert Stake argues that it is useful to try to select cases that are typical or representative of other cases.²⁸ In other words, cases can be selected purposely according to whether or not they typify certain characteristic or contextual locations.

Therefore in addition to the Clinton administration's commitment to NATO expansion, this research chooses NATO's engagement in Kosovo and Libya as two main case studies. Kosovo was the very first test of a newly transformed NATO in the post-Cold War era. The debate at that time was a debate over the survival of NATO. The case of Kosovo provided the kind of wakeup call that the Alliance desperately needed, galvanising the US into a more resolute stance in promoting the transformation of NATO. In other words, it was Kosovo that laid a solid foundation for the US to seriously consider and then decide to remain committed to NATO in the post-Cold War period. Libya occurred as the most recent operation accomplished under the framework of NATO. The Libyan mission saw NATO 'reborn' as an effective institution to deal with European security issues, especially when the impression was gained that Washington was turning its back on NATO after 9/11. The debate over US commitment to NATO at this time is very serious, as the inherent problems of NATO were repeated in the post-Cold War period, firstly in Kosovo, then in Afghanistan, now peaking at Libya. It was unprecedented given that the US top officials, for the first time, publically emphasised that NATO was standing on the brink of disappearance.²⁹ These two operations, taking place at two ends of a period, also demonstrated the US response to two types of crises under different

Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

²⁷ Robert E. Stake (1995) *The Art of Case Study Research*, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, p. 4. Daniel L. Stufflebeam, George F. Madaus and Thomas Kellaghan (2000) 'Evaluation Models: Viewpoints on Educational and Human Services Evaluation', *Evaluation in Education and Human Services*, Vol. 49, p. 283.

²⁸ Robert E. Stake (1995) p. 4.

²⁹ Robert Gates (2011) 'Reflections on the Status and Future of the Transatlantic Alliance'.

circumstances: Clinton faced a more severe situation than Bush; and Obama, compared with Bush, encountered new and more complicated problems such as the rigorous economic pressures.

But it does not mean the Bush administration or the case of Afghanistan is unimportant. Compared with Kosovo and Libya, it is just not that 'representative' to the author's research. To be specific, one apparent reason why the section on Afghanistan is not a complete case study is because Afghanistan is still an ongoing mission, meaning there is no final judgment about this operation. Kosovo was a completed case and Libya was also over, but so far the NATO commitment to Afghanistan has not been completed, though there is a withdrawal timetable.³⁰ On October 26, 2014, Britain and America officially ended the combat in Afghanistan, but NATO's commitment to Afghanistan has not been completed given the major challenge that Afghanistan will not have an effective airforce until 2017. Hence it was declared that after 2014 a residual force of about 9,800 troops would remain in Afghanistan which includes a group of troops to train and advise Afghan security forces and a separate group of Special Operations forces to continue counterterrorism missions. And those forces would be halved by the end of 2015.³¹ Additionally, it is also pragmatically hard to complete the case study on Afghanistan due to the inconclusive judgments about the most controversial presidency of George W. Bush. The selection of primary cases is based on 'representativeness' rather than 'comprehensiveness'.³² Moreover, as the law of conducting research in the field of social science reveals, it is almost impossible and unnecessary to cover all information related to a particular topic. Thus it is very common to narrow down the research, as long as typical and influential cases are not ruled out.

³⁰ At a practical level, NATO is committed during 2014 to withdrawing fully from combat operations in Afghanistan. A follow-on mission (Operation Resolute Support) is then meant to 'train, advise and assist the Afghan security forces'. See 'ISAF Ministers Discuss Afghan Mission Progress and Post-2014 Planning', NATO, 27 February 2014.

³¹ Karen DeYoung (2014) 'Obama to Leave 9,800 US Troops in Afghanistan', *The Washington Post*, 27 May. Aamer Madhani and Tom Vanden Brook (2014) 'Obama: It's Time to Turn the Page on A Decade of War', *USA Today*, 27 May.

³² Christine B. Meyer (2001) 'A Case in Case Study Methodology', *Field Methods*, Vol. 13, No. 4, pp. 329-352. John Gerring (2007) *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Chapter 5, pp. 86-150.

2.2.3 Data collection and data analysis

As is the case with most qualitative approaches, this research aims to provide findings with great validity and reliability. According to Jerome Kirk and Marc Miller, research designs are valid if they are testing what the researcher thinks they are testing. And if the results are similar over a series of interactions by using the same measure, the research is reliable.³³ Triangulation of data is the key strategy employed to increase both the validity and reliability of the findings, meaning to use a wide variety of sources, including both primary and secondary ones.

The secondary sources comprise a wide range of books, journal articles, reports written by leading academics in the field, while the primary sources contain newspaper articles, official speeches, governmental documents, press conferences, memoirs of administration officials and more importantly, interviews. Specifically, to collect news regarding a particular topic, the author accessed *Factiva*, a database which covers nearly 9,000 sources, including 1,000 international and US newspapers. To gather official speeches and governmental documents, the author mainly relied on on-line presidential libraries and official websites of the White House, US Department of Defence, the American Presidency Project, Library of Congress, NATO, and the UN. Furthermore, conducting interviews is also an effective approach to collect first-hand data when conducting qualitative research. During the summer of 2012, the author undertook a four-week research visit to Washington, conducting a programme of interviews that not only focused on the Libyan intervention but also covered general questions about US policy towards NATO in the post-Cold War period. Apparently the first question of interview design is who to interview: ‘insiders’ are the best choice, however, as a student, the author has little access to get in touch with officials who are now in office. As a result, the interviewing schedule involved contacts at major Washington think-tanks, including the Woodrow Wilson Centre, the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, the Council on Foreign Relations, the United States Institute of Peace, the Atlantic Council, the Centre for a New American Security, and the RAND.³⁴ The author also made contact with foreign policy

³³ Jerome Kirk and Marc L. Miller (1986).

³⁴ See Appendix 1 ‘Interviewees’.

academics at Georgetown University and with foreign and defence policy staff specialists on the Capitol Hill. Although most of those interviewees did not work as officials in the Obama administration, they either used to be officials or possessed indirect links with the government. The interviews were conducted on a 'snowballing' basis, thus the author was often recommended by one interviewee to another, which not only helped expand the scope of interview, but also enabled the author to get in touch with some 'insiders' eventually.

The purpose of the interviews was to elicit general background information on the research topic, as well as to obtain important perspectives on the Libyan operation. As the nature of the interview is semi-structured, the author outlined some questions beforehand in order to inspire the interviewees' interest, such as:

- 1, Why were the European countries willing to shoulder the 'Responsibility to Protection' (R2P) earlier than the US in the case of Libya?*
- 2, Why did the US hesitate to intervene in Libya at the very beginning? Why did the US change its mind and join the operation later? Why did the US then transfer the Libyan mission to NATO and choose 'leading from behind' as its major strategy?*
- 3, How did NATO and the US avoid sinking into the post-Libya nation-building task that was depicted as a 'quagmire' in the case of Afghanistan and Iraq?*
- 4, What lessons can be drawn from the Libyan operation? Is there a 'Libyan model' that can be applied to future crisis managements (or even to the deadlocked Afghanistan)?*

As those questions were actually open-ended, the interviewees always spontaneously moved to talk about relevant topics. In practice, each interview lasted for one to two hours, providing the author with sufficient information to understand what the interviewees' real opinions were. Additionally, being in Washington DC in election year put the author in an ideal position to follow and record domestic political debates which the interventions in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya stimulated. All these secondary and primary materials combined provided a deep understanding of why certain US decisions were made and enabled the author to develop an exhaustive picture of US commitment to NATO in the post-Cold War period.

In regard to data analysis, the interviews were recorded and transcribed, providing first-hand data for analysis. Moreover, the case study adopts process tracing analysis as the primary method, which aims to ‘generate and analyse data on the causal mechanisms or processes, or events, actions, expectations, and other intervening variables that link putative causes to observed effects’.³⁵ The key to this method is to explore each of the hypothesised causal mechanisms. More specifically, within the general method of process tracing, this research employs ‘process verification’, a method that involves testing whether the observed processes among variables in a case match those predicted by previously designated theories.³⁶ With pattern matching, the author looks at different empirical evidence related to the same case to see whether they support the theoretical propositions.

2.3 Historical background

The vast Pacific and Atlantic Oceans serve as natural barriers that posit a separation between the American scene and the infectious strife of the European ‘quarter of the globe’, resulting in a foreign policy of non-entanglement that had ever dominated America for a century. To speak of America as a political given and as a space whose contours were beyond question was not rhetoric until Japan attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, which ‘broke this emotional deadlock’ by forcing the US to engage in world affairs, especially in the whirl of European affairs.³⁷

American non-entanglement was soon replaced by American internationalism, starting to march towards ‘universal mission’ and ‘exceptional superiority’.³⁸ However, the desire to promote American-style democracy was soon discouraged by the ambitious Soviet expansion, which caused severe panic among Western European

³⁵ Andrew Bennett and Alexander L. George, ‘Process Tracing in Case Study Research’, *The MacArthur Foundation Workshop on Case Study Methods*, Harvard University, 17-19 October 1997, p. 4.

³⁶ There are two approaches of process tracing: process verification and process induction. The former involves testing whether the observed processes among variables in a case match those predicted by previously designated theories (Predict Case) while the latter focuses on the inductive observation of apparent causal mechanisms as potential hypotheses for future testing (Deviant Case). See Ibid. and Andrew Bennett and Alexander L. George (2005) *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, Cambridge: MIT Press.

³⁷ Robert Dallek (1983) *The American Style of Foreign Policy*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, p.7.

³⁸ Samuel P. Huntington (2004) *Who Are We? The Challenges to America's National Identity*, New York: Simon and Schuster.

countries. Hence in order to secure a 'Democratic Bridgehead', namely Western Europe, from being occupied by Communism once and for all, America decided to promote a transatlantic bloc that could ensure a more effective response to the Soviet threat.³⁹ The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation was initially an intergovernmental military alliance built upon the North Atlantic Treaty, which was signed in Washington D. C. on April 4, 1949. The creation of NATO explicitly demonstrated the importance of US participation both in countering the military power of the Soviet Union and in preventing the revival of nationalist militarism. As a result, during the Cold War America was fully committed to NATO as a platform to provide both legitimacy and resources for necessary actions against the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact military alliance.

2.3.1 NATO during the Cold War

To a certain extent, the Cold War was a 'war' between two camps: the US-led NATO and the Soviet Union-led Warsaw Pact. According to Lord Ismay, the first NATO Secretary General, the Alliance's goal was 'to keep the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans down'.⁴⁰ Thereby whether NATO was an efficient organisation during the Cold War depended on whether NATO had achieved this goal. First of all, it was apparent that NATO helped drag the US into European affairs. By working under the framework of NATO, Washington and European capitals were bonded together to fight against their common enemy. Hence, the US commitment to NATO not only marked the end of US anti-entangling alliances tradition, but also enabled the US to use force when confronted with the Soviet threat. In addition to keeping the Russians out, NATO also succeeded to paraphrase Lord Ismay in keeping the Germans down during the Cold War. On one hand, Germany's strength had already been highly reduced due to the division of its territory after the end of WWII. On the other, European members of NATO enjoyed increasing protections from the US and the Alliance. All these changes made Germany's rivalry with other European countries very unlikely. Therefore, Germany's chancellor Helmut Kohl took the initiative and

³⁹ Zbigniew Brzezinski (1997) *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives*, New York: BasicBooks.

⁴⁰ David Reynolds (ed.) (1994) *The Origins of the Cold War in Europe: International Perspectives*, New Haven: Yale University Press, p. 13.

negotiated Soviet consent to the reunification of Germany. Kohl assured anxious allies in Washington, London and Paris by agreeing that Germany would be reunified within the US-led NATO, and that Germany would support further centralisation of the European Union.⁴¹ The reunification of Germany within the Alliance further contributed to keep the US in and Germany down.⁴²

NATO was basically a US-led defensive organisation during the Cold War. Although the Alliance demonstrated its strength in dealing with the Soviet threat and the German problem, it also revealed tensions among member states. West Germany was apparently pro-NATO, because it saw its accession to NATO as ‘an important step in the country’s post-war rehabilitation and paved the way for Germany to play a substantial role in the defence of Western Europe during the Cold War’.⁴³ Most of Germany’s neighbours appreciated NATO as insurance against German ambitions.⁴⁴ Britain also welcomed the establishment of NATO in that the Alliance helped tie Britain more closely with the US. France, quite the opposite; voiced its criticism of the US domination of the Alliance. French President Charles de Gaulle regarded NATO as a special relationship between the US and Britain, and called for a creation of a tripartite directorate that would put Paris on an equal footing with Washington and London.⁴⁵ After receiving negative response from both the US and Britain, de Gaulle started withdrawing French armed forces from NATO command; banning the stationing of foreign nuclear weapons on French soil; and constructing an independent defence for France.⁴⁶ In short, throughout the Cold War, France, however, remained a member of NATO, prepared to fight against possible Communist attack with its own forces stationed in West Germany.

⁴¹ Michael Lind (2006) *The American Way of Strategy: US Foreign Policy and the American Way of Life*, New York: Oxford University Press, p. 134. Adrian Hyde-Price (2000) *Germany and European Order*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, p. 140.

⁴² ‘A Germany anchored in NATO would be more constrained, and therefore more predictable, than a neutral and non-aligned Germany’. See Adrian Hyde-Price (2000) *Germany and European Order*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, p. 140.

⁴³ ‘History: Germany’s Accession to NATO: 50 Years on’ (2005).

⁴⁴ Franz Oswald (2006) *Europe and the United States: The Emerging Security Partnership*, Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, p. 64.

⁴⁵ Andreas Wenger, Christian Nuenlist and Anna Locher (ed.) (2007) *Transforming NATO in the Cold War: Challenges beyond Deterrence in the 1960s*, New York: Routledge, pp. 67-69.

⁴⁶ Thomas Schoenbaum (1988) *Waging Peace and War: Dean Rusk in the Truman, Kennedy, and Johnson Years*, New York: Simon and Schuster, p. 421.

It is no wonder NATO's unity was breached due to the French withdrawal from NATO's military command structure. Many NATO member states expressed surprise over the French action. In the US, surprise was also mixed with dismay and anger, given that de Gaulle's plan had forced Washington to transfer military aircraft out of France and return control of the air force bases to France. Some of President John Kennedy's advisors strongly condemned de Gaulle for his abandonment of French military commitment to NATO, which would threaten the security of other European allies. Further, what the US worried about more was that de Gaulle's action might set a disturbing precedent.⁴⁷ Although US fears were proved unrealistic because no other member state followed France's step, French 'defection' indeed unveiled tensions within NATO.

What was worse, the US domestic debate disclosed US concern about its own commitment to NATO in view of the burden-sharing problem. Specifically the debate focused on the fact that there remained many free-riders in the Alliance relying on US protection while reducing their own defence budget. As a result, the late 1960s and early 1970s saw a series of attempts by Senator Michael Mansfield, the majority leader in the Senate, to introduce identical Senate Resolutions on the issue of cutting the US deployment on the European continent. According to Mansfield, reducing US troops would give the Europeans an incentive to raise the forces necessary for their defence, thereby to assume more responsibility and share more burdens in the Alliance.⁴⁸ Particularly, Mansfield called for the number of US troops stationed in Europe to be halved in 1971. However, his proposal was rejected due to 'tremendous pressure from the Nixon White House and zealous NATO supporters in the foreign policy community'.⁴⁹ Although Mansfield failed in attempt to achieve the reduction of US troops overseas, his Amendment threw light on the various determinants of US policy towards Europe.

⁴⁷ 'French Withdraw Navy from NATO', *The History*, 21 June 1963.

⁴⁸ Detlef Junker, Philipp Gassert, Wilfried Mausbach, and David Morris (ed.) (2004) *The United States and Germany in the Era of the Cold War, 1945-1990: A Handbook*, New York: Cambridge University Press, p. 83.

⁴⁹ Ted Galen Carpenter (2014) 'Hagel's Futile Quest for NATO Burden Sharing', *The National Interest*, 04 March.

The US warning that Washington would pull its troops out of Europe never seemed to work well. Former Under Secretary of Defence Robert Komer candidly confirmed the reason why America's burden-sharing admonitions invariably failed was because 'The Europeans know that we need them as much as they need us'.⁵⁰ Therefore throughout the Cold War the US had struggled for a change in the burden-sharing dynamic. However, little improvement took place. This burden-sharing problem combined with other tensions within the Alliance, highly influenced US policy on NATO in the post-Cold War period. The problems of NATO, which had been discovered during the Cold War, persisted in the post-Cold War period. That was why it was necessary to review those tensions in order to find better solutions in the post-Cold War era. Despite those long-standing challenges, what needed to be addressed immediately after the end of the Cold War was: indeed, what was the ongoing role of NATO if the major threat no longer existed yet the burden-sharing problem still existed?

2.3.2 NATO expansion

Although it was widely predicted that NATO would dissolve as the Soviet Union disintegrated, the Clinton administration was dedicated to supporting NATO renewal and enlargement. Yet, NATO expansion was not put on the agenda as soon as the Soviet Union collapsed, because officials both in the State Department and the Pentagon worried that enlargement would make management of the Alliance more difficult and would damage US-Russian relations. The US domestic debate over whether to increase or scale down international commitments also peaked, hindering further discussion about a more ambitious NATO. Simultaneously, European countries began to pursue an independent defence policy, though they had been accustomed to US protection throughout the Cold War.

The disadvantageous situation faced by NATO soon improved. President Clinton wished to enhance America's national security through enlarging the community of democratic, market-oriented states. Moreover both Republicans and ethnic

⁵⁰ Alan Tonelson (2001) 'NATO Burden-Sharing: Promises, Promises' in Ted Galen Carpenter (ed.) *NATO Enters the 21st Century*, London: Frank Cass Publishers, p. 41.

communities within the US urged the Clinton administration to demonstrate US leadership rather than pleasing Russia blindly. It soon became obvious that expanding NATO would help the US maintain involvement in Europe, especially in filling the strategic vacuum in Central Europe.⁵¹ On the other hand, after undertaking a series of attempts including the failure of European efforts to resolve the crisis through the European Community in Bosnia, Europe finally acknowledged the importance of US leadership in dealing with European security issues. Most importantly, the fact that the Bosnia crisis was eased through the reassertion of NATO's primacy reinforced Central and Eastern European countries' faith that their safety could only be secured with and through the Alliance. Leaders of Central and Eastern Europe more than once expressed their willingness to join NATO, appealing to erase the line drawn for them in 1945. With multilateral efforts the US finally announced the invitation to Poland, Hungary and Czech Republic at Madrid in July 1997. The first round of NATO expansion became a watershed in the history of NATO, as the capabilities and relevance of NATO were visibly reaffirmed.

2.3.3 'Out-of-area' missions: Bosnia and Kosovo

Another great breakthrough which NATO obtained in the post-Cold War period was that it began to participate in non-Article Five missions, the authorisation of which was based on the 'New Strategic Concept' released at the Rome Summit in 1991. Bosnia put forward the first challenge to NATO after the end of the Cold War. As the crisis of Bosnia unfolded, leading policymakers on both sides of the Atlantic agreed that it was a 'European project' that Europe alone should handle. The US was happy to see Europe take the initiative on Bosnia, as conflict in the Balkans was not one which US policymakers wished to embroil the US in. On the other hand, European leaders regarded the conflict as an opportunity to show that they were able to resolve European security problems without having to rely on the US for help. However such claims that Europe could best deal with the implosion of Yugoslavia proved hollow. The failure of the European Community implied that NATO was still the only viable mechanism for implementing military operations and that NATO was to continue to be the primary vehicle for American involvement in Europe. Hence when Kosovo

⁵¹ Stanley Sloan (1994) 'The United States and the Use of Force in the Post-Cold War World: Towards Self-Deterrence', *CRS Report for the Congress*, 20 July. Ronald Asmus (2002). James Goldgeier (1999).

came along, it was expected that the US would irrevocably affirm its commitment to NATO because success for NATO in Kosovo would help consolidate US leadership in Europe and further unify the alliance.

The lesson of Bosnia apparently suggested that if NATO were to succeed in Kosovo, it would require US leadership and capabilities. However, the US was actually reluctant to get involved. US concerns were mainly related to the fundamental need to avert a humanitarian catastrophe, which determined both whether and when NATO would intervene. The Pentagon, unsupportive of Clinton's liberal internationalist aims, hesitated to see US forces embroiled in a humanitarian crisis of only peripheral strategic interest. But on the other hand, considering that US leadership and NATO's credibility had already been at stake in Bosnia due to its failure to intervene earlier, the US could not afford to repeat the mistake it had made in Bosnia. To this end, Operation Allied Force (OAF), a 78-day campaign, finally commenced on May 24, 1999, though without specific UN authorisation except previous UN resolutions that had called for 'full and prompt implementation of the agreements Milosevic had signed with the OSCE and NATO'.⁵² According to one RAND study, OAF was 'the most intense and sustained military operation to have been conducted in Europe since the end of the World War II'.⁵³ In other words, OAF was an overwhelming success, demonstrating NATO's both 'unwavering political cohesion and (the) unmatched military capability that will be required to meet the security challenges of the 21st century'.⁵⁴ Meanwhile, Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary General, firstly reflected on the dilemma of humanitarian intervention in 1999, appealing to the international community to take the 'Responsibility to Protect' (R2P) if a country was unwilling or unable to protect its people from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.⁵⁵ The adoption of this emerging norm gave all states a responsibility to uphold and protect basic human rights regardless of where they were

⁵² Ivo H. Daalder and Michael E. O'Hanlon (2000) *Winning Ugly: NATO's War to Save Kosovo*, Washington: Brookings Institute Press, p.102.

⁵³ Benjamin Lambeth (2001) *NATO's Air War for Kosovo: A Strategic and Operational Assessment*, Santa Monica: RAND, pp. xx-xxi.

⁵⁴ Report to Congress Kosovo Operation Allied Force After-Action Report (2000), p. xviii.

⁵⁵ Kofi Annan (1999) 'Two notions of Sovereignty', *The Economist*, 18 September.

violated, legally authorising the international community including NATO to play a pivotal role in preventing humanitarian conflicts in the future.⁵⁶

On a military level, NATO, led by the US, succeeded in achieving its military objectives in both Bosnia and Kosovo, but on a political level, it also revealed significant weakness in that the inability to reach consensus within the Alliance could impede timely and effective actions. NATO's institutional structure proved a double-edged sword: while providing a certain legitimacy and credibility, it also decreased military effectiveness due to the consensus engine. In the meantime, key NATO allies complained that the US was seeking to turn NATO into a 'global policeman' based on their perception that the US was keen to see NATO engage well beyond its borders, particularly in the Persian Gulf and Middle East. Overshadowed by deficiencies in alliance strategy, NATO's capability and credibility faced reassessment within the US, soon leading to a momentous US decision to bypass NATO when terrorists caused the deaths of over 3000 innocent lives on September 11, 2001.

2.3.4 'Out-of-Europe' mission: the 'War on Terror' after 9/11

The attack of 9/11 'did not merely produce a shift in NATO's deployments but reversed the founding rationale of the Alliance'. America came to regard NATO as a channel to 'export' European capabilities out-of-area so as to impel global US goals in the 'War on Terror' rather than continuing to 'import' an American security guarantee into the European theatre as it did during the Cold War. Such a revolution caused unrest among allies as European countries unconvinced by the doctrinal underpinnings of the global 'War on Terror' noticing that they 'had to live with the unrecognisable implications of US hegemony'.⁵⁷

Most challenging of all, the nature of post-9/11 threats again raised poisonous question about NATO's viability. Collective security formalised as well as enhanced by Article Five had been self-evident when NATO had encountered the Warsaw Pact across the Iron Curtain, whereas the paradigm was more or less undermined after 9/11

⁵⁶ Todd Lindberg (2005) 'Protect the People', *The Washington Times*, 27 September.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

because terrorist strikes would influence countries individually and an ally could ensure its own safety by claiming the divisibility of alliance security. Before 1989, NATO members could identify where the threat on the Alliance would come from, while after 9/11 the geography of confrontation was revolutionised. The front line was everywhere especially in terms of cyber and biological terrorist attacks. As Ellen Hallams emphasised, ‘9/11 heralded the dawn of a new—and infinitely more dangerous—era in the international security environment’.⁵⁸ Emerging threats, those defined as “form of attack against which the United States has no defences”, eventually altered the implications of the American dominance: though Washington’s sway over NATO had not been problematic when members altogether encountered with the Soviet threat, it became controversial due to the increasing influence America placed on the homeland security policies of European countries.⁵⁹ The global ‘War on Terror’ resulted in restrictions on American deployments through NATO, as any intervention led by Washington would be perceived as ‘an intolerable expression of American imperialism’.⁶⁰

Four weeks after 9/11, the US announced a massive military intervention in Afghanistan, Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). The irony of the *ad hoc* coalition was that out of a coalition consisting of 69 nations, only 21 made military contributions to OEF; and of those 21 nations, 14 were NATO members. In this sense, OEF demonstrated the inherent difficulties in maintaining loose coalitions, and NATO with its core strength of institutional structure would better accomplish the mission. Therefore, since August 2003, NATO has had a substantial military presence in Afghanistan, and in September 2006, it assumed the overall responsibility for all military operations. NATO continued to exist and Washington remained formally committed to the defence of Europe, dispelling the rumours that NATO could hardly persist in the context of new insidious and shapeless challenges following 9/11.

Although transformation had been on NATO’s agenda since the end of the Cold War, NATO missions in Kosovo and Afghanistan showed that the capability and

⁵⁸ Ellen Hallams (2010) p. 54.

⁵⁹ Steven Lambakis, James Kiras and Kristin Kolet (2002) ‘Understanding “Asymmetric” Threats to the United States’, *National Institute for Public Policy*, p. v.

⁶⁰ Erwan Lagadec (2012) *Transatlantic Relations in the 21st Century: Europe, America and the Rise of the Rest*, London: Routledge, p.107.

interoperability of the Alliance required further improvement. In 2002, a set of reforms designed to ‘improve and develop new military capabilities for modern warfare in a high threat environment’ was passed at the Prague Summit, enabling NATO to thrive in safeguarding member states’ interests and values according to revised strategic concept and at the same time underscoring that the US was still the very engine driving NATO forward rather than ‘losing interest in NATO’.⁶¹ Subsequent years witnessed NATO remaining a successful alignment to preserve the Alliance, but the war in Afghanistan and the ‘near-death experience’ of the Iraq crisis put forward many new challenges, especially the tensions among NATO members, to be resolved. The 2006 Riga Summit set its goal of healing rifts, one about the military contributions to the war in Afghanistan, and the other concerning whether NATO should assume a more global role.⁶² The great achievement of the 19th NATO Summit was the Comprehensive Political Guidance (CPG), which reaffirmed collective defence as the core purpose of NATO, whilst simultaneously emphasising the potential of NATO’s contributions to conflict prevention and crisis management.⁶³ Although some scholars continued to argue that the elucidation of NATO’s grand strategy remained too controversial, it was obvious that ‘the debate was no longer whether NATO would take the lead role in post-9/11 combat operations, but simply what role, if any, it would play’.⁶⁴

2.3.5 A new model: the Libyan Model?

By the time Libya imploded in 2011, the US had already learned enough from both Bosnia and Kosovo that quicker response would result in fewer deaths of innocent civilians. The US decided to join its European allies to tackle the Gaddafi regime, even though there was no direct, first-order US interests at stake in Libya. Meanwhile, the lesson of Afghanistan vividly implied that working through the institutional structure of NATO early on was crucial to guarantee a far more advantageous position when confronting enemies. With regard to this, immediately after the initial air campaign, the US announced the transfer of the Libyan mission to NATO and started

⁶¹ ‘Prague Summit Declaration’ (2001).

⁶² Paul Reynolds (2006) ‘NATO Looks for Global Role’, *BBC News*.

⁶³ ‘Riga and Beyond: The Political Transformation of NATO’.

⁶⁴ Ellen Hallams (2010) p. 102.

‘leading from behind’. Libya was hailed as a great success in the history of humanitarian intervention: the United Nations identified the severity of the crisis at the earliest time and legally authorised the use of military force through the UN Security Council Resolution 1973; France and Britain took the lead to wage war against Gaddafi immediately when the conflict escalated, even without the US participation; President Obama finally based intervention in Libya on the doctrine of the ‘Responsibility to Protect’, after ending a heated debate over ‘another Rwanda or another Afghanistan?’ within the administration, and provided indispensable support to guarantee a victory.

What was more, attention was also paid to codifying a ‘Libyan Model’ that could be applied to future crisis management. But the fact that tensions within NATO revealed by the low rate of member contribution obviously overshadowed the Libyan mission as a successful NATO operation. The concern was graphically expressed in retiring Defence Secretary Robert Gates’s June 2011 speech, ‘Reflections on the Status and Future of the Transatlantic Alliance’—‘In the past, I’ve worried openly about NATO turning into a two-tiered alliance...Between those willing and able to pay the price and bear the burdens of alliance commitments, and those who enjoy the benefits of NATO membership—be they security guarantees or headquarters billets—but don’t want to share the risks and the costs. This is no longer a hypothetical worry. We are there today. And it is unacceptable.’⁶⁵ By reemphasising the internal disharmony of NATO, the question of whether the US still viewed NATO as the main transatlantic forum for discussing political issues and resolving crises was again placed under the spotlight.

The US has driven NATO’s transformation process since the end of the Cold War when the Clinton administration provided determined support for expansion and helped ensure US leadership in NATO’s Balkans missions. And although previously President Bush decided to bypass the Alliance, leaving many in Europe feeling abandoned and rejected by the US, he, particularly in his second term, showed determination to equip NATO with the necessary capabilities to deal with threats posed by international terrorism. Thus when President Obama took office, it was

⁶⁵ Robert Gates (2011) ‘Reflections on the Status and Future of the Transatlantic Alliance’.

widely expected that he would follow his predecessors' steps to better use NATO's capabilities to create alliance missions that were sustainable and expeditionary. The anticipation turned out to be true, given that the US announced the transfer of the Libyan mission to NATO, which enhanced the relevance of the Alliance. But on the other hand, throughout the transformation process of NATO in the post-Cold War period, a hard reality was repeatedly reflected in those 'out of area' missions that the Europeans simply lacked the necessary capabilities to make the kinds of contributions that the US required.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

3.1 Introduction

Generally speaking, this research utilises three theoretical frameworks to analyse the US commitment to NATO in the post-Cold War period: Alliance Theory; the combination of realism and liberal internationalism to explain the overall US foreign policy preference; and the Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) especially the Bureaucratic Politics Model. Alliance Theory is applicable to this research, given that this study mainly focuses on NATO which is essentially an alliance. Therefore Alliance Theory can help the author address key questions regarding why NATO was formed and especially why NATO persisted without the Soviet threat. To understand the decision-making of US policy on NATO, the author pays attention to two levels of analysis. Specifically, the combination of realism and liberal internationalism serves as the overarching framework on the top level, while the FPA and the Bureaucratic Politics model enable the author to analyse US foreign policy at the micro level, namely the foreign policy decision-making in the government. Traditionally, interaction between realism and liberal internationalism has great influence on US foreign policy, hence to understand US decision-making on a given issue, it is necessary to figure out whether it is the realist, or the liberal internationalist, or a combined approach that leads to the US final decision. But this only provides a broad picture of possible directions for US foreign policy, it is not enough to understand why and how a particular policy is made. That is why the author applies the FPA to the study, as the bureaucratic wrangling gives an insight into concrete steps toward final decision-making. The nature of the governmental decision-making process suggests that every policy is a result of bargaining among the major players. As a result, ‘pulling and hauling’ among participants plays a vital role in understanding why the US pursues certain foreign policy, who might influence it, and how it is conceived.

3.2 Alliance Theory

3.2.1 Neorealist Theory and Alliances

Traditionally, literature on alliances has focused on two key questions: Why do states form alliances? What makes alliances durable? Those two questions are actually strongly associated with each other, as without the understanding of what factors hold alliance members together, it would be impossible to know what changes that make alliances either break up or continue. Hence although this research aims to examine NATO in the post-Cold War period, which is basically about NATO's persistence, it should not ignore the explanation of NATO's formation, given that it is the premise of systematically analysing NATO as an alliance and that it will shed light on the interpretation of NATO's continuance.

A number of works have examined the origins of alliance, and almost all traditional works fall within the broad compass of either 'balance of power' or 'balance of threat' theory. Hans Morgenthau argued in his *Politics among Nations* that alliances 'are a necessary function of the balance of power operating in a multiple state system'.¹ Kenneth Waltz, founder of neorealism, argued when balance-of-power politics prevailed, two options would be available for those who wished to survive, namely internal balancing and external balancing. The former referred to internal efforts to increase economic, strategic and military strengths; while the latter recommended states to increase security by forming alliances.² Paul Schroeder supplemented Waltz's view on alliance formation from a perspective of threat, suggesting that alliance was formed either to oppose a threat, or to accommodate a threat, or to provide the great powers with a 'tool of management' over weaker states.³ George Liska also agreed that 'alliances are against, and only derivatively for, someone or something'.⁴ Glenn Snyder further clarified that the 'general incentive' to ally with

¹ Hans Morgenthau (1959) 'Alliance in Theory and Practice', in Arnold Wolfers (ed.) *Alliance Policy in the Cold War*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, p. 175.

² Kenneth Waltz (1979) *Theory of International Politics*, Boston: McGraw-Hill, pp. 118-121.

³ See Paul Schroeder (1979) 'Alliances, 1815-1945: Weapons of Power and Tools of Management', in Klaus Knorr (ed.) *Historical Dimensions of National Security Problems*, Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.

⁴ George Liska (1962) *Nations in Alliance: The Limits of Interdependence*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins

some other states referred to the need to enhance its security and preservation of a balance of power.⁵ Among the traditional literature were many accounts of individual alliances, hence the lack of systematic tests of general hypotheses reduced the universal applicability of those approaches. For example, case studies on individual alliances could tell neither how states would behave in different circumstances nor which motives for alignment were most common.

Stephen Walt, after recognising these challenges, developed the ‘balance of threat’ theory. He firstly identified the alliance formation as a response to threat, then emphasised that four factors including aggregate power, geographic proximity, offensive power and aggressive intentions, would affect the level of threat that states might pose.⁶ Although Walt tried to distinguish states behaviours between *balancing* and *bandwagoning*⁷, he concluded that balancing behaviour was much more common than bandwagoning simply because no statesman could be completely sure of what another would do.⁸ Therefore balancing beliefs was a recurring theme throughout the Cold War, implying that ‘states facing an external threat will align with others to oppose the states posing the threat’. Furthermore, according to Walt, the greater the threatening state’s aggregate power, offensive capabilities and aggressive intentions were, the greater the tendency for those nearby to align against it.⁹ Put simply, the greater the threatening power to be balanced, the greater the cohesion of the alliance against it. This was in line with Snyder’s prediction that during the Cold War period, which was recognised as an era of bipolar world, *abandonment* was highly unlikely because the superpowers were solidly committed by their strong interests to defend their allies and keep them within the alliance.¹⁰ In general, both ‘balance of power’

Press, p. 12.

⁵ Glenn Snyder (1984) ‘The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics’, *World Politics*, Vol. 36, No. 4, pp. 461-495.

⁶ Stephen Walt (1987) *The Origins of Alliances*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, p. 22.

⁷ See Stephen Walt (1987) p. 17. Balancing is defined as allying with others against the prevailing threat; bandwagoning refers to alignment with the source of danger. If balancing is more common than bandwagoning, then states are more secure, because aggressors will face combined opposition. But if bandwagoning is the dominant tendency, then security is scarce, because successful aggressors will attract additional allies.

⁸ Stephen Walt (1987) pp. 28-29.

⁹ Ibid. p. 32.

¹⁰ See Glenn Snyder (1984) and Glenn Snyder (1997) *Alliance Politics*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, pp. 180-200. According to him, in every alliance, each party is bound to fall victim to two opposite worries: abandonment, or ‘the subjective probability that the partner will defect and the cost to oneself if it does’; and entrapment, or ‘being dragged by one’s commitment into a war over interests of

and ‘balance of threat’ theories predicted that states would act to restore the disrupted balance by creating alliances when confronted by dangerous threats.¹¹

This was exactly what happened during the Cold War period when NATO was built up to balance the USSR. Intimidated by the threat of the USSR, 12 countries including the US, Canada, Portugal, Italy, Norway, Denmark, Iceland, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, France and the UK signed the North Atlantic Treaty in Washington D. C. on April 4, 1949. Ever since its formation, NATO has served as a tool to balance against the most serious threat to its member states. In response, the USSR formed the Warsaw Treaty Pact with its allies in 1955, replacing the rivalry between two superpowers with confrontations between two camps. By comparing the membership of these two alliances, ‘the US and its allies surpass the Soviet alliance network by a considerable margin in the primary indicators of national power’.¹² One explanation for those Western European countries’ apparent preference to choose the US as their ‘perfect ally’ lay in the fact that ‘its aggregate power ensures that its voice will be heard and its actions will be felt’.¹³ Simply, by joining NATO, Western European countries would gain security protections from the US. Additionally, it was anticipated that the USSR would pose a greater threat to Europe if it predominated the confrontation with the US. Halford Mackinder claimed in *The Geographical Pivot of History*, ‘who rules Eastern Europe commands the Heartland, who rules the Heartland commands the World Island, who rules the World Island commands the World’.¹⁴ Based on this logic, the USSR certainly enjoyed a great advantage to occupy the so-called Heartland due to its central position, hence imposing a foreseeable threat to the other countries that were also located in the Heartland. On the contrary, staying far enough away from these allies, the US was not considered as a significant threat. As Walt concluded, ‘the US is geographically isolated but politically popular, whereas the Soviet Union is politically isolated as a consequence of its geographic proximity

the ally that one does not share’.

¹¹ The influence of this traditional neorealist explanation has been profound. Nowadays, there are still many scholars like Davide Fiammenghi who argues that states’ incentives for balancing or bandwagoning are a function of their relative power and their perceived level of security. See Davide Fiammenghi (2011) ‘The Security Curve and the Structure of International Politics’, *International Security*, Vol. 34, No. 5, pp. 126-154.

¹² Stephen Walt (1987) p. 274.

¹³ Ibid. p. 277.

¹⁴ Halford Mackinder (1904) *The Geographical Pivot of History*, *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. XXIII, No. 4.

to other states'.¹⁵ 'Politically popular' did not mean European countries overwhelmingly welcomed US foreign policy at that time, but it suggested that European countries preferred to see the US as a safeguard for their security.

It seemed that traditional literature on alliances had fully explained why the alliance was established and how member states would choose their allies. In general, nearly all realists believed that while threats might not be sufficient to produce alliances, they were necessary. However, neorealism bypassed the issue of alliance persistence after the initial enemy had been defeated. 'What, then, happens when threats go away, either through a shift in the balance of power or a change in the allies' perception of threat?'¹⁶ Ideally, according to neorealism, if alignment was formed because of threat, it would falter in the absence of a threat. Renato De Castro took the US-Philippine alliance as an example, arguing that once the Soviet threat subsided, the security cooperation between the US and the Philippines folded up abruptly.¹⁷ Ole Holsti, Terrence Hopmann, and John Sullivan found that 'one major cause of their disintegration may be the reduction of disappearance of the external threat against which they were initially formed'.¹⁸ Gunther Hellmann and Reinhard Wolf also agreed with this claim, believing that 'almost all alliances dissolved once the original threat faded'.¹⁹ Generally, traditional literature, heavily realist or neorealist in orientation, concluded that alliances would not persist without threats. Thus through the neorealist lens, when the USSR collapsed, the threat perceived by NATO members shrank rapidly and substantially, which would weaken NATO's cohesion to the edge of break-up. The year of 1989 witnessed the fall of the Berlin Wall, signalling the demise of the Soviet threat. John Mearsheimer predicted that without the Soviet threat, NATO would cease to be an effective alliance.²⁰ Kenneth Waltz took the same view, believing that 'NATO is a disappearing thing. It is a question of how long it is going to remain as a significant institution even though its name may

¹⁵ Stephen Walt (1987) p. 277.

¹⁶ Robert McCalla (1996) 'NATO's Persistence after the Cold War', *International Organisation*, Vol. 50, No. 3, pp. 445-475.

¹⁷ Renato De Castro (2003) 'Special Relations and Alliance Politics in Philippine-US Security Relations, 1990-2002', *Asian Perspective*, Vol. 27, No. 1, pp. 137-164.

¹⁸ Ole Holsti, Terrence Hopmann, and John Sullivan (1973) *Unity and Disintegration in International Alliances: Comparative Studies*, New York: Wiley, p. 88.

¹⁹ Gunther Hellmann and Reinhard Wolf (1993) 'Neo-realism, Neo-liberal Institutionalism, and the Future of NATO', *Security Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 1, p. 16.

²⁰ John Mearsheimer (1990) 'Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War', *International Security*, Vol. 15, No. 4, p. 52.

linger on'.²¹ Yet, contrary to those expectations, NATO expanded rather than disbanded in the following decade, indicating that neorealist predictions showed little sign of coming true immediately after the end of the Cold War.

Randall Schweller tried to revise Walt's explanation by pointing out the prevalent bias of neorealism that assumed status quo motivations. He believed that 'Sometimes, the status-quo order is destroyed by the decline of a dominant power, such as the demise of the Soviet Union and the wave of democratic revolutions that followed in 1989.'²² In his view, both 'balance of power' and 'balance of threat' theories were based on the perception of fear, considering only cases in which the goal of alignment was security, however, 'Alliance choices...are often motivated by opportunities for gain as well as danger, by appetite as well as fear'.²³ Hence balancing was not necessarily more common than bandwagoning.²⁴ According to Schweller, 'The aim of balancing is self-preservation and the protection of values already possessed, while the goal of bandwagoning is usually self-extension: to obtain values coveted.'²⁵ His main contention was that patterns of alliances predominantly were shaped by conflicting state motives, and that the compatibility of political goals was perceived as 'the most important determinant of alignment decisions'.²⁶ Although his 'balance of interests' theory fulfilled neorealist explanations of alliance formation by introducing various motivations, it did not develop further the analysis on alliance persistence. Clearly in analysing the criteria that alliances would disintegrate, neorealist arguments

²¹ Kenneth Waltz's testimony quoted in Gunther Hellmann and Reinhard Wolf (1993) 'Neo-realism, Neo-liberal Institutionalism, and the Future of NATO', *Security Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 1, p. 17.

²² Randall Schweller (1994) 'Bandwagoning for Profit: Bringing the Revisionist State Back In', *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 1, p. 107.

²³ Ibid. p. 79.

²⁴ Lorenzo Cladi and Andrea Locatelli even claimed that the Europeans has been seeking 'gains' from the US through bandwagoning since the end of the Cold War. Yet according to Adrian Hyde-Price, Cladi and Locatelli's work did not offer convincing evidence that supported the claims they made for bandwagoning. See Lorenzo Cladi and Andrea Locatelli (2012) 'Bandwagoning, Not Balancing: Why Europe Confounds Realism', *Contemporary Security Policy*, Vol. 33, No. 2, pp. 264-288 and Adrian Hyde-Price (2013) 'Neither Realism nor Liberalism: New Directions in Theorising EU Security Policy', *Contemporary Security Policy*, Vol. 34, No. 2, pp. 397-408.

²⁵ Randall Schweller (1994) p. 74.

²⁶ Randall Schweller (1998) *Deadly Imbalances: Tripolarity and Hitler's Strategy of World Conquest*, New York: Columbia University Press, p. 22. Sten Rynning took the same view, arguing that alliances should thus be understood as expressions of both power and purpose. This was also how he accounted for NATO's enduring relevance. See Sten Rynning (2005) *NATO Renewed: The Power and Purpose of Transatlantic Cooperation*, New York: Palgrave and Sten Rynning and Jens Ringsmose (2008) 'Why Are Revisionist States Revisionist? Reviving Classical Realism as an Approach to Understanding International Change', *International Politics*, Vol. 45, p. 28.

including ‘balance of power’, ‘balance of threat’ and ‘balance of interests’ all fell short.

Robert McCalla viewed NATO as a deviant case to test neorealist theory, as those traditional arguments only ‘help explain NATO’s birth and Cold War lifespan but cannot account for subsequent developments’.²⁷ It was true that in the post-Cold War period, which was regarded as an era of multipolar world, opportunities for realignment abounded. Thereby, according to Snyder, alliances would never be absolutely firm because the fear of being abandoned by one’s ally was ever-present. But, as he went on, the suspicion that allies were considering realignment might generate an incentive to realign pre-emptively. Allies might be induced to act through rigid strategies as they hoped not to lose their partners.²⁸ However, Marco Cesa criticised Snyder’s model, arguing that Snyder seemed to be excessively focused on a restricted, almost uniquely defensive interpretation of security. As Cesa suggested, the possible aims of alliances and their typologies varied.²⁹ In other words, in addition to concerns about security or threat, there might be some other factors that also highly influenced the alliance formation and durability.

3.2.2 Organisational Theory, Institutional Theory and Alliances

NATO’s formation can be explained by the traditional realist alliance theory which emphasises on member states’ perception of either the ‘fear for danger’ or the ‘opportunity for gains’. The implication of this theory is obvious that alliance will break up when this perception has gone. But NATO survived in the post-Cold War period even when the ‘fear’ and ‘opportunity’ was disappeared. To understand why NATO is different from other traditional alliances, or why the realist alliance theory is not enough to explain NATO’s persistence, it is useful to examine NATO by applying the Organisational Theory and the Institutional Theory. Hans Morgenthau put forward a concept called ‘ideological solidarity’, which highlighted the importance of ideology in alliance formation. States that shared similar political, cultural, or other traits were more likely to ally. George Liska, however, supported the view that

²⁷ Robert McCalla (1996) p. 447.

²⁸ Glenn Snyder (1984).

²⁹ Marco Cesa (2010) *Allies Yet Rivals: International Politics in 18th Century Europe*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp. 47-50.

alliances were formed in the face of a common enemy, and suggested that ‘ideological or ethnic affinities’ between states might also be important factors in unifying alliance partners.³⁰ Actually most realists downplayed the importance of ideology in alliance formation, merely viewing alignments as expedient responses to external threats. However, the durability of alignment rested largely on internal harmony originating from common ideologies. President Reagan once claimed that the US and its allies had ‘rediscovered their democratic values...that unite us in a stewardship of peace and freedom with our allies and friends’.³¹ Despite the fact that the Soviet threat directly led to the creation of the transatlantic alliance, common values further fastened ties between the US and its European allies. Walt, as another proponent of this view, offered explanations as to why common ideologies could hold alliances together: alignment with similar states might share common beliefs in political principles that created the sense of belonging and loyalty to the unity. Yet he also emphasised that the likelihood of conflict among member states would grow if the ideology called for obedience to a single authoritative leadership. The collapse of the Soviet Union provided striking evidence for these arguments. An authoritative Soviet occupation dramatically decreased the cohesion of the Communist bloc, causing ideological disputes that damaged the source of legitimacy for each of the member states. As Louise Richardson summarised, alliances could not be continuous because eventually the interests of the allies would conflict.³² However, neorealist theory ignored the possibility that alliances might also have organisational interests that were different from those of single members. If true, this might account for alliance persistence, as organisational interests helped enhance the alliance’s ability to survive and prosper.

Robert McCalla pointed out that ‘an organisational perspective moves beyond neorealism’s limits by taking the analysis beneath the interstate level and looking at some of the specific internal features that characterise this alliance.’³³ NATO is such an alliance that enjoys organisational interests. In other words, in addition to material institutions and practices, the transatlantic relationship is also structured by shared

³⁰ George Liska (1962) p. 27.

³¹ Ronald Reagan (1983) ‘State of the Union Message’, *The New York Times*, 26 January.

³² See Louise Richardson (1996) *When Allies Differ: Anglo-American Relations During the Suez and Falklands Crises*, Basingstoke: Macmillan.

³³ Robert McCalla (1996) p. 460.

ideological values.³⁴ With a belief in the natural affinity of democracies, members of NATO view each other as inherently good states that have no intention to pose a threat to one another. Therefore, even though the US plays a dominant role in NATO, its leading style differs from the Soviet Union's: the US never behaves coercively to force the other member states to compromise. The reason, as Benjamin Pohl clarified, was because of the considerable 'degree of overlap between the purposes that the United States and its European allies pursue' and the extent to which they share a common commitment to the 'current liberal global order' and a 'shared liberal ideology'.³⁵ Therefore, sharing similar traits, member states regard the alliance as a way of defending their own political principles, which avoid ideological quarrels and mistrusts on one hand and enhance natural loyalty to the unity on the other. According to Walt, once the alliance became a symbol of credibility, it was more likely to persist.³⁶ The US statesmen, in particular, were highly convinced by this belief that allies were attracted by displays of both strength and will. Thereby they committed themselves to the build-up of an image of credibility. Former Secretary of State Dean Rusk put it as follows 'the integrity of... (America's) alliances is at the heart of the maintenance of peace, and if it should be discovered that the pledge of America was worthless, the structure of peace would crumble and we would be well on our way to a terrible catastrophe.'³⁷ The US, though enjoying sufficient capabilities to control other member states, contributed more to promoting the trustworthiness and reliability of NATO, which in turn upgraded the credibility of both the US and the alliance as a whole.

As can be seen, organisational interests, namely credibility originating from common ideologies or values, can drive the behaviour of alliances; however, there are limits to how far organisational interests can sustain them. An alliance with a well-developed organisational entity attached can have its life prolonged, yet this does not guarantee that an alliance in the absence of a threat will never die. What survival truly depends on, as Robert McCalla concluded, was 'how much (NATO) members benefit from the

³⁴ Adrian Hyde-Price (2013) p. 405.

³⁵ Quoted in Adrian Hyde-Price (2013) p. 405. For more information, also see Benjamin Pohl (2013) 'Neither Bandwagoning nor Balancing: Explaining Europe's Security Policy', *Contemporary Security Policy*, Vol. 34, No. 2, pp. 353-373.

³⁶ Stephen Walt (1997) 'Why Alliances Endure or Collapse', *Survival*, Vol. 39, pp. 156-179.

³⁷ Franklin Weinstein (1969) 'The Concept of A Commitment in International Relations', *the Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 13, No.1, p. 52.

alliance and the security relationship that surrounds it'.³⁸ Actually, neorealist theory had already told us that alliances would be formed only when members believed benefits outweighed costs. Conversely, any decrease in benefits relative to costs would bring challenges to the continuance of alliances. James Morrow applied the autonomy-security trade off model to explain why alliances failed, suggesting that members would move away when the increase in security was no longer worth the sacrifice of state autonomy.³⁹ As neorealists calculated, NATO was no different from other alliances that were as costly in policy and resource terms as one could imagine. Thus once the threat that previously justified those costs shrank, NATO member states would quit as expected. However, again, neorealist prediction was inaccurate, as NATO moved forward to be a robust and healthy alliance.

In wartime, the benefit to alliance members mainly meant collective security that largely outweighed individual sacrifice. But when the Soviet threat subsided, NATO members began to question what other benefits besides the containment of the USSR it could bring to its members. In the immediate aftermath of the Cold War, North Atlantic Ministers expressed their concern that, 'Even in a non-adversarial relationship, prudence requires NATO to counterbalance the Soviet Union's substantial residual military capabilities.'⁴⁰ By warning how threatening those former members of the Soviet bloc would be, this ministerial communiqué actually called for NATO members to continue to stay together. It was persuasive at the beginning, yet when Russian troops were fully withdrawn from Europe, significant cuts in nuclear weapons were underway, and active participation of former USSR members in PfP increased, the necessity of NATO's continuance was again under question. Could NATO keep on benefiting its members in the 'new strategic environment'? Following major debates about the direction for NATO, the Clinton administration began to sponsor a programme of NATO renewal and enlargement, which helped NATO being transformed to deal with 'instabilities that may arise from the serious economic, social, and political difficulties, including ethnic rivalries and terrorist disputes'.⁴¹ Those redefined security problems did not only characterise new threats that tied NATO

³⁸ Robert McCalla (1996) p. 461.

³⁹ See James Morrow (1991) 'Alliances and Asymmetry—An Alternative to the Capability Aggregation Model of Alliances', *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 35, No. 4, pp. 904-933.

⁴⁰ NATO Ministerial Communiqué, December 1990.

⁴¹ NATO Rome Summit, 1991.

members together, but also increased the relevance of NATO, as it evolved into a broad multilevel and multi-issue institution.

The transformation of NATO was regarded as a watershed in its history because ‘the wider the range of functions that an alliance fulfils beyond its core defence function, the less responsive it will be to changes in the threats it faces and the more likely it is to be transformed in purpose as its external environment changes’.⁴² Those who predicted an end to NATO often took too narrow a perspective of NATO’s function, yet in fact, as Douglas Stuart claimed, NATO had room for more than strictly military functions, given that it also encompassed effective mechanisms for solving disputes and coordinating foreign and political policies.⁴³ Robert Keohane required theorists to take ‘advantage of the fact that alliances are institutions, and that both their durability and strength (the degree to which states are committed to alliances, even when costs are entailed) may depend in part on their institutional characteristics’.⁴⁴ According to Walt, alliances with high levels of institutionalised cooperation between partners would obtain greater credibility that helped extend the alignment.⁴⁵ Basically, NATO members all agree on the Article Five promise that ‘an attack on one is an attack against all’, which lays a solid foundation for legalised cooperation. Hence norms and practices are smoothly formalised within NATO’s structure and process, reducing ‘both long-term and short-term transaction costs of members by providing guidelines to their own behaviour and to the behaviour of others’.⁴⁶ In this way, as Douglas Bland noted, NATO consolidated its members’ common defence through the creation of mechanisms for acting on shared expectations, lowering the need to constantly adjust security ties in response to continual external changes.⁴⁷ Moreover, with regard to the fundamental idea of institutionalism, once a regime was set up, there were both

⁴² Robert McCalla (1996) p.470.

⁴³ Douglas Stuart (1993) ‘NATO’s Future as a Pan-European Security Institution’, *NATO Review*, Vol. 41, No. 4.

⁴⁴ Robert Keohane (1989) *International Institutions and State Power: Essays in International Relations Theory*, Boulder: Westview Press, p.15.

⁴⁵ Stephen Walt (1997) pp. 156-179.

⁴⁶ Robert McCalla (1996) p. 462.

⁴⁷ Douglas Bland (1991) *The Military Committee of the North Atlantic Alliance: A Study of Structure and Strategy*, the Greenwood Publishing Group, pp. 12-13.

internal and external incentives to perpetuate it rather than start anew when problems arose.⁴⁸

By the end of the Cold War, NATO members had already spent 45 years learning how to work as a long-term coalition through a sophisticated structure, so there was no reason for them to abandon the existing procedures and mechanisms and to form an alternative alliance, not to mention that creating a new regime was more costly than maintaining the old one. In other words, NATO's great asset has been its institutional fabric. As Celeste Wallander suggested, the 'adaptability of the alliance's institutional assets' was one major explanation of NATO's persistence in the absence of the primary threat.⁴⁹ Further, according to Kostas Ifantis, 'the impact of institutionalisation within NATO has been instrumental in increasing its attractiveness'.⁵⁰ Therefore from the institutionalist perspective, NATO would persist as long as its members continued to value what the alliance did and wished to modify NATO as necessary to deal with new problems.

In short, in terms of the original design, NATO is no different from other alliances that are formed in the face of a common enemy. However, NATO also enjoys some unique features that no other alliance can display. Sharing common values in addition to common interests, NATO members double the cohesion of the alignment, setting NATO off from traditional alliances that have no choice but to terminate when a common threat subsides. Credibility, deriving from its high degree of organisational and institutional developments, enables NATO to be a unity of protecting respected political principles for all member states. To sum up, alliances like NATO are likely to endure, because once a unity becomes a symbol of credibility, it begins to enjoy sufficient reasons to persist.

⁴⁸ Robert McCalla (1996) p. 463.

⁴⁹ Celeste Wallander (2000) 'Institutional Assets and Adaptability: NATO after the Cold War', *International Organisation*, Vol. 54, No. 4, pp. 705-735.

⁵⁰ Kostas Ifantis (2007) 'NATO's Strategic Direction after Riga: NATO's Post-Cold War Adaption', *International Journal*, Vol. 62, No. 3, p. 587.

3.3 US Foreign Policy—Realism vs. Liberal Internationalism

3.3.1 Non-entanglement vs. internationalism

Before the turn of the 20th century, the US adopted ‘non-entanglement’ as the guidance of its foreign policy. Although many observers used ‘isolationism’ to characterise US foreign policy, it is more appropriate to replace ‘isolationism’ with ‘non-entanglement’. By definition, isolationism aims at isolating one country from world affairs including alliance formation, international trade, and the formulation of international law. In this sense, US foreign policy did not completely follow isolationism, given that America had built up close relationships with Canada and some other countries in South America. What the US really pursued at that time was not isolationism but non-entanglement, especially within the whirl of European affairs.

According to geopolitics, geographical strengths can help safeguard a state’s advantageous position in international competitions. With regard to this, since nature separates the US from European countries by the endless ocean, the less America is involved in European disputes and politics, the more advantages for America. In addition, by considering the then-US capability that was relatively weak compared with those European powers, the US actually also hoped to prevent European intervention by its ‘natural barriers’. Thus, non-entanglement had been popular among Americans for more than a century, peaking at George Washington’s farewell address in 1796, which reiterated America’s traditional aversion to ‘entangling alliances’: ‘It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliance with any portion of the foreign world’.⁵¹ President Jefferson’s inaugural pledge was no less clear: ‘peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none’.⁵² At that time, the US was cautious about signing treaties with Europe, simply because it could not see any reason why the US should get involved in European affairs.

However, after the Spanish-American War, American leaders began to feel the world closing in on the US. Understanding that ‘no nation can any longer be indifferent to

⁵¹ President Washington (1796) ‘Washington’s Farewell Address’.

⁵² President Jefferson (1801) ‘First Inaugural Address’, 4 March.

any other’⁵³, the McKinley administration reshaped America’s new image in the world by committing itself to promoting an ‘open door’ commercial policy in China. On December 2, 1902, President Theodore Roosevelt gave his first state-of-the-union message to Congress, claiming that ‘more and more the increasing interdependence and complexity of international political and economic relations render it incumbent on all civilised and orderly powers to insist on the proper policing of the world’.⁵⁴ He called for the US to act like other great powers, no longer warning European powers to stay out of global affairs but claiming America’s right to intervene in them. But according to Robert Dallek, ‘most Americans in Roosevelt’s day were unprepared to accept his realism as a guideline for current and future actions abroad’.⁵⁵

When it came to the Wilson administration, another round of debate over non-entanglement arose rapidly. President Wilson picked up Roosevelt’s banner but carried it a step further toward a different approach. He supported US engagement in the political and security affairs of the world as long as it was consistent with ‘American principles’ such as democracy, sovereign equality, free trade, and transparent diplomacy. His famous ‘fourteen points’, combined his proposal for ‘a society of nations’ into a comprehensive programme for post-war peace, which later formed the core of Wilson’s idealism. Although apparently, both Roosevelt and Wilson were eager to abandon the anti-entangling alliances tradition, they differed profoundly in the means they chose toward that end. As John Ruggie concluded, ‘Where Roosevelt tried to “normalise” America to get it to act as he believed a great power should, Wilson appealed to American principles—to American “exceptionalism”’.⁵⁶ In broad terms, the reverse side of non-entanglement is internationalism, but to be specific, there are two competing forms of internationalism, namely realist unilateralism and liberal multilateralism. The failure to find common grounds between Roosevelt and Wilson actually resulted from the traditional fight between these two forms of internationalism. In the end, both strict unilateralist means and Wilson’s soft multilateralism lost, suggesting that non-entanglement won by

⁵³ William McKinley (1901) Speech on ‘Pan-Am Exposition Address’, 5 September.

⁵⁴ Theodore Roosevelt (1902) Speech on ‘State of the Union 1902’, 2 December.

⁵⁵ Robert Dallek (1983) *The American Style of Foreign Policy*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, p. 35.

⁵⁶ John Ruggie (1997) ‘The Past as Prologue?: Interests, Identity, and American Foreign Policy’, *International Security*, Vol. 21, No. 4, p. 96.

default.⁵⁷ It is no wonder that the US refused to join the League of Nations. The US anti-entangling alliances tradition was so strong that it stopped Washington from participating in any international organisation.

3.3.2 Realist unilateralism vs. liberal multilateralism

The US anti-entangling alliances tradition was seriously questioned after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, which ‘broke this emotional deadlock’ by forcing the US to engage in world affairs.⁵⁸ The lessons that future American leaders learned from this experience ‘were not only that isolationism is “bad” and internationalism “good” for the sake of international stability and the pursuit of US interests, but, more subtly, that unilateralism had opened the door to isolationism’.⁵⁹ The initial purpose in adopting non-entanglement was to guarantee America as ‘the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all...the champion and vindicator only of her own’.⁶⁰ However, although President John Adams promised not to go abroad ‘in search of monsters to destroy’; he could not prevent other states from setting foot on the American land.⁶¹ Therefore, the following presidents were unprecedentedly clear about which track to take. In order to drag the US out of the shadow of non-entanglement, they chose Wilson’s multilateralism, not Theodore Roosevelt’s unilateralism, though they departed from Wilson instrumentally. Franklin Roosevelt ‘grafted a collective security scheme onto a concert of power’ by introducing a ‘four/five policemen’ formula to the design of UN, which seemingly solved the dilemma of how to integrate those two forms of internationalism. President Truman moved more straightforwardly toward multilateralism by sponsoring the NATO formation, the root of which was the Article Five commitments that ‘an attack on one is an attack against all’.

According to the logic of US Senate rejection of joining the League of Nations, the US should not have joined NATO. However, the Truman administration claimed that

⁵⁷ See Thomas Knock (1992) *To End All Wars: Woodrow Wilson and the Quest for a New World Order*, New York: Oxford University Press.

⁵⁸ Robert Dallek (1983) p. 7.

⁵⁹ John Ruggie (1997) p. 97.

⁶⁰ President Adams (1821) ‘Warning Against the Search for “Monsters to Destroy”’, 4 July.

⁶¹ Ibid.

its choice of instrument was not only determined by the need to deter the USSR, but also by the domestic appeal: ‘to transform the “old” European order, making it economically and militarily better able to take care of itself; rendering it less war-prone and therefore less likely to drag the United States into yet another European war; and ultimately making Europe more like the United States’.⁶² The US commitment to NATO became a watershed in US foreign policy, as it not only marked the end of the US anti-entangling alliances tradition, but also demonstrated that the US was prepared to get into warfare. However, realists like George Kennan believed there was no need to establish a ‘legalistic-moralistic’ relationship between the US and Europe.⁶³ Regarding NATO as barely an improvement over the UN, he feared that NATO expansion might be problematic. Yet, Kennan lost that debate because ‘he had exorcised the spirit of idealistic Wilsonianism’.⁶⁴ The public, quite the opposite; had already agreed with the desirability of an active US role in the world. Thus when John Kennedy came into office, he ‘took it for granted that the United States was a superpower with global interests and responsibilities’.⁶⁵

Generally, internationalist leaders differed little on why international engagement for the US was necessary; where they differed a lot was the means they chose toward that end. Realists such as Theodore Roosevelt preferred to ‘normalise’ the US, promoting it to act the same as other great powers did; while liberals, beginning with Wilson, focused on ‘American exceptionalism’, urging the necessity to link US international engagement to US principles at home. Although liberal leaders experienced internal conflicts over balance-of-power politics, they basically agreed that multilateralism was consistent with American nationalism that ‘is a civic nationalism embodying a set of inclusive core values: intrinsic individual as opposed to group rights, equality of opportunity for all, antistatism, the rule of law, and a revolutionary legacy which

⁶² John Ruggie (1997) p. 103.

⁶³ George Kennan (1967) *Memoirs: 1925-1950*, Boston: Little, Brown, pp. 406-407.

⁶⁴ Frank Ninkovich (1994) *Modernity and Power: A History of the Domino Theory in the Twentieth Century*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 152.

⁶⁵ David Fromkin (1996) *In the Time of the Americans: FDR, Truman, Eisenhower, Marshall, MacArthur-The Generation That Changed America's Role in the World*, New York: Vintage Books, p. 7.

holds that human betterment can be achieved by means of deliberate human actions, especially when they are pursued in accordance with these foundational values'.⁶⁶

Prior to the Cold War, Americans did not see their country as a normal great power due to its isolated geopolitical condition. It was the outbreak of the Cold War that 'put America into power politics to stay'.⁶⁷ Since then, realist internationalism has become popular among American leaders, given the perceived need to contain the USSR. Hans Morgenthau, one of the 'founding fathers' of realist school in the 20th century, argued that nation states, as the main actors in international relations, all pursue 'national interest', the concept of which is defined in terms of power.⁶⁸ He contended that 'international politics, like all politics, is a struggle for power'.⁶⁹ Thereby, statesmen will seek policies 'either to keep power, to increase power, or to demonstrate power'.⁷⁰ This realist view of power politics played a major role in US foreign policy, facilitating America to exercise globe-spanning power during the Cold War period.

In analysing the reason why America engaged in global affairs through initiating NATO, a multilateral military organisation, realists fall into two camps: defensive realism and offensive realism. Kenneth Waltz, identifying the international system as perpetually anarchic, claimed that states must act in a way that ensures their security above all. No one can count on the goodwill of others to help; hence states must always be ready to fend for themselves.⁷¹ According to Waltz, NATO was set up due to defensive purposes, given that NATO members were pursuing collective security rather than aggregate power in the face of an imminent threat from the Soviet Union. Yet, John Mearsheimer took a different view, holding that states were not satisfied with a given amount of power, so they sought opportunities to increase power at the expense of competitors. Considering the uncertainty of state behaviour in an anarchic international system, 'great powers recognise that the best way to ensure their security

⁶⁶ John Ruggie (1997) p.110.

⁶⁷ David McCullough (1993) *Truman*, New York: Simon and Schuster, p. 549.

⁶⁸ See Hans Morgenthau and Kenneth Thompson (1985) *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 6th ed., New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

⁶⁹ Hans Morgenthau (1948) *Politics Among Nations: the Struggle for Power and Peace*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, p. 13.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 21.

⁷¹ Kenneth Waltz (1979).

is to achieve hegemony now, thus eliminating any possibility of a challenge by another great power'.⁷² With respect to offensive realism, the US motive behind NATO formation was to achieve 'regional hegemony' that would enable America to act as offshore balancer to intervene in other regions when states within those regions were unable to prevent the rise of a hegemon. That was also why some European allies were actually reluctant to see America unfolding its strategy through such a transatlantic alliance. But when the confrontation between the US and the USSR became irreversible, Western European countries eventually chose to join NATO, given that America could provide security protections for them. In short, one key difference between defensive and offensive realism lies in the assumption whether states' behaviour is security-oriented or power-oriented. Although both theories share a common ground that great powers' active participation in world affairs is vital to the making of international order, offensive realism apparently falls short in explaining why the US adopted NATO as the instrument to increase its international commitments. If NATO were designed as a part of US aggressive policies, aiming to interfere or even manipulate European affairs, those Western European countries would not have joined NATO.

The realist approach guided US foreign policy throughout the Cold War. Owing to the lesson of isolationism and the grim reality that the Soviet Union was posing tremendous threat, America extended its engagement in international affairs during that period. But, as Henry Kissinger concluded in his *Diplomacy*, once the Soviet threat subsided, realism by itself would not suffice to frame US foreign policy.⁷³ Put simply, whether realist considerations would continue to keep America on the track of internationalism was under question. After spending so many years on competing with the Soviet Union abroad, it was time to focus on domestic affairs, as the public seemed to prefer. To scale down international commitments, President George H.W. Bush called for spending cuts which would eventually result in significant reductions in funding and force levels for NATO's conventional and nuclear forces. The possibility of the termination of institutionalised US support for European security was seriously raised in this period, as was the possibility of NATO ceasing to exist. However, the renaissance of the US non-entangling alliances tradition faded away

⁷² John Mearsheimer (2001) *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, New York: W. W. Norton, p. 35

⁷³ See Henry Kissinger (1994) *Diplomacy*, New York: Simon and Schuster.

quickly when President Clinton announced his support for NATO renewal and enlargement.⁷⁴ If the US support for NATO formation relied largely on realist consideration about the Soviet threat, then what was the US motive behind NATO expansion after the collapse of the USSR? Was US foreign policy continuing to be dominated by realist claims?

In the aftermath of the collapse of the Bretton Woods system and the first oil shock in the 1970s, the Cold War understanding of national interests suffered a lot of criticism for its negligence of emerging realities. Realism, providing ‘a narrow and incomplete description and explanation of world affairs’, was eroding due to its exclusive focus on military matters.⁷⁵ Robert Keohane ‘was thus in the right place at the right time—politically and academically—to make these breakthroughs’.⁷⁶ In *Transnational Relations and World Politics*, he and Joseph Nye undermined the realist state-centric paradigm by highlighting the importance of non-state actors. Moreover, by defining ‘transnational interaction’ as ‘the movement of tangible or intangible items across state boundaries when at least one actor is not an agent of a government’, they underscore the importance of nongovernmental actors in international interactions.⁷⁷ However, they did not continue with this track to explore how transnational actors influenced international relations; instead, they moved forward to understand explanations of the international political process. In 1977, *Power and interdependence* was published, offering ‘an alternative, pluralistic perspective to that of power and security’.⁷⁸ According to Keohane and Nye, both economic and political interdependence among states intensified with the advent of globalisation, leading to a decline in the use of military forces and coercive power in international relations. In

⁷⁴ At the very beginning, although the Clinton administration did not withdraw to an isolationist posture, it announced US domestic prosperity as a key ‘pillar’ of its policy, declining to increase the international commitments. But under the pressure of Republicans and ethnic communities including the Polish-, Hungarian-, and Czech-Americans in the US, President Clinton declared that ‘the United States will remain fully engaged in Europe and in its transitions toward a new and better future’. This at least meant Clinton did not follow the non-entangling alliances tradition. See President Clinton (1993) ‘Remarks at a Reception for the Opening of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum’, 21 April.

⁷⁵ Richard Mansbach and John Vasquez (1981) *In Search of Theory: A New Paradigm for Global Politics*, New York: Columbia University Press, p. 6.

⁷⁶ Andrew Moravcsik (2009) ‘Robert Keohane: Political Theorist’ in Helen Milner and Andrew Moravcsik (ed.) *Power, Interdependence, and Nonstate Actors in World Politics*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 260.

⁷⁷ Joseph Nye and Robert Keohane (1971) ‘Transnational Relations and World Politics: An Introduction’, *International Organisation*, Vol. 25, No. 3, p. 332.

⁷⁸ Gustaaf Geeraerts (1995) Analyzing Non-State Actors in World Politics, *POLE-Papers*, Vol. 1, No. 4.

analysing how international politics is transformed by interdependence, they proposed a concept of ‘complex interdependence’, serving as a contrast to the realist image of world politics. As defined, it has three main characteristics including the use of ‘multiple channels that connect societies including inter-state, trans-governmental and transnational relations’; the agenda ‘consisting of multiple issues that are not arranged in a clear and consistent hierarchy’; and a decline in the use of military force in international relations.⁷⁹ Keohane and Nye further predicted that states would therefore try to use international organisations, which had become ‘a normal part of foreign as well as domestic relations’, as instruments other than military force for obtaining power.⁸⁰ ‘Their discussion of international regimes and organisations hints at the importance of “agenda-setting” and institutionalisation.’⁸¹

Based on the assumption that international organisations begin to play a more important role in shaping state behaviour, Keohane committed himself to address the central puzzle concerning why and how institutions alter state behaviour. In *After Hegemony*, by taking ‘the existence of mutual interests as given’, his analysis focuses on examining ‘the conditions under which they will lead to cooperation’.⁸² He firstly distinguished ‘cooperation’ from ‘harmony’ by underlining that harmony resulted from automatically converged preferences while cooperation referred to a situation where actors’ motives were mixed and even uncertain, reducing the likelihood of optimal outcomes unless active steps are taken. According to Keohane, shared interests are necessary, yet insufficient, to explain cooperation. What he found was that international regimes had the stabilising power that helped cooperation to persist. That was also why the decline of US power after the collapse of Bretton Woods did not lead to disorder. Therefore, by valuing considerable elements of institutional continuity, he concluded that the transaction costs of regime creation were much higher than the costs of regime maintenance.

⁷⁹ Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye (1977) *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition*, Boston: Little, Brown, pp. 24-25.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 26.

⁸¹ Andrew Moravcsik (2009) p. 250.

⁸² Robert Keohane (1984) *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 6.

Liberal internationalism has certainly influenced US foreign policy in the post-Cold War era. For example, by extending the ‘stabilising power’ of NATO to deal with ‘new threats’ including instabilities arising from economic, social, and political difficulties, the Clinton administration also facilitated NATO’s participation in ‘out of area’ action in Bosnia and Kosovo. However, it did not declare the realist course invalid. Actually both realists and liberal internationalists have noticed the importance of combining their aspirations together as a rule. According to Kissinger, realism, if it wanted to survive in the post-Cold War era, ‘must be coupled with an animating “vision” that provides the Americans with a sense of ‘hope and possibility that are, in their essence, conjectural’—and for which he, the master practitioner of the realist craft, now looks to the ‘idealism’ that he spent his career mocking.⁸³ Coincidentally, Keohane and Nye also declared that conditions of complex interdependence would not prevail at all times. They clarified that most situations would fall somewhere between the two ideals of realism and complex interdependence.⁸⁴ What succeeding presidents actually sought in the post-Cold War period was to link the pursuit of American interests to the remaking of the world order in a way that attracted the support of American people.

John Ikenberry, who shared the same liberal vision as Keohane and Nye that ‘open markets, international institutions, cooperative security, democratic community, progressive change, collective problem solving, shared sovereignty, the rule of law’ were core aspects of the liberal international ‘project’, argued that ‘In the early twenty-first century, liberal order is...marked by increasingly far-reaching and complex forms of international cooperation’.⁸⁵ By defining liberal international order as open and rule-based arrangements between states, Ikenberry further identified three versions of liberal international order, the first of which referred to the Wilsonian plan that was ‘built around a “thin” set of institutional commitments...(and) a “thick” set of norms and pressures—public opinion and the moral rectitude of statesmen’.⁸⁶ According to Ikenberry, ‘liberal internationalism 1.0’ turned out to be an ‘historical failure’ because ‘it simply did not fit the realities of the time’, which lacked

⁸³ John Ruggie (1997) p. 92.

⁸⁴ Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye (1977) pp. 24-25.

⁸⁵ John Ikenberry (2009) ‘Liberal Internationalism 3.0: America and the Dilemmas of Liberal World Order’, *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 7, No. 1, p. 71.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

‘underlying conditions needed for a collective security system to function’.⁸⁷ By contrast, ‘liberal internationalism 2.0’ that appeared in the post-1945 decades was highly adapted to existing realities. Ikenberry characterised the world order during the Cold War as an American-led liberal international order, which was a result of the weakness of post-war Europe and rising tensions with the USSR. The American-led order or Western system has functioned well even after the end of the Cold War. One development of liberal internationalism was the elaboration of the universal rights of man, legally permitting the international community to intervene in the affairs of sovereign states due to the ‘Responsibility to Protect’. Hence in the early 20th century, President Clinton called for US-led NATO to participate in ‘out of area’ missions in Bosnia and Kosovo where human rights were unprotected.

However, following heated debates about the appropriate direction for post-9/11 American internationalism, the Bush administration declared its response to 9/11 in a unilateral way, though member states of NATO requested America to invoke Article Five immediately after the attack. President Bush determined to bypass NATO, ‘choosing instead to adopt a more flexible approach based upon forming an *ad hoc* coalition’.⁸⁸ This decision directly led to the marginalisation of the alliance that had been at the very heart of the transatlantic relations for more than 50 years. The Prague Summit, which was depicted as ‘the last days of the Atlantic Alliance’, witnessed a serious crisis in NATO’s continuation, as America turned to fight the ‘War on Terror’ through an alliance of willingness.⁸⁹ Some anxious observers even argued that America stepped back to ‘isolationism’/non-entanglement or at least to unilateral realism. But on the other hand, as Ellen Hallams noted, ‘With the US and NATO engaged in critical operations in Afghanistan and an ongoing transformation agenda, the US remains firmly committed to NATO’.⁹⁰ In September 2002, the US National Security Strategy was revealed, highlighting the American foreign policy to be ‘as much multilateral as possible, as much unilateral as necessary’.⁹¹ In dealing with Iran,

⁸⁷ Ibid., pp. 75, 78.

⁸⁸ Ellen Hallams (2010) *The United States and NATO since 9/11: the Transatlantic Alliance Renewed*, London: Routledge, p. 52.

⁸⁹ Charles Kupchan (2002) ‘The Last Days of the Atlantic Alliance’, *The Financial Times*, 18 November.

⁹⁰ Ellen Hallams (2010) p. 2.

⁹¹ Interview with Robert Lieber, Professor of Government and International Affairs at Georgetown University, 11 July 2012.

the Bush administration basically subcontracted to the 'EU Three' including Britain, France and Germany from 2003 to 2006; and on the issue of the North Korean nuclear programme, it was deeply involved in the six-party talks, which was not unilateral at all. With regard to all these facts, which approach, realism or liberal internationalism, did President Bush really prefer? Did he simply select one and abandon the other? Did he choose a completely different way from Clinton? This thesis will try to find possible answers to those questions through looking in detail at operations in Kosovo and Afghanistan. But only by asking these questions, a conclusion can be drawn that at least liberal internationalism has evolved and will evolve again in the future.

The liberal world order seems to be problematic recently with global economic slowdown and the rise of non-Western states. Many observers believe that 'the world will not just look less American...(but) also look less liberal'.⁹² Although acknowledging that America's position in the global system is changing, Ikenberry insists the liberal international order will be alive and well, given that 'its rules and institutions have not just enshrined open trade and free markets but also provided tools for governments to manage economic and security interdependence'.⁹³ Moreover, according to Ikenberry, what China and other emerging great powers want is not to overturn the liberal order but to gain more authority and leadership within it. 'Democracy and the rule of law are still the hallmarks of modernity and the global standard for legitimate governance', thus an alternative less open and rule-based 'Beijing model' would not dominate as long as the liberal international order continues to renew.⁹⁴ As a result, Ikenberry puts forward 'liberal international order 3.0' in which authority should move toward universal institutions such as the UN and the US will remain at the centre of the global system with its worldwide system of alliances like NATO. Hierarchy will remain but it will be 'flatter', therefore 'the US will not be able to rule...but can still lead'.⁹⁵

If Bush were a pure unilateralist, NATO's validity would have been damaged considerably, leaving no room for his successor to utilise the alliance. But in reality,

⁹² John Ikenberry (2011) 'The Future of the Liberal World Order', *Foreign Affairs*.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

President Obama found NATO still capable in accomplishing assigned tasks. The case of Libya again underscored NATO's advantages in providing a high level of legitimacy and in accumulating sufficient support, which encouraged America to remain committed to the alliance. It was the US that decided to transfer the Libyan mission to NATO, demonstrating the Obama administration's preference for liberal multilateralism. Characterised as a multilateralist, Obama initially believed he could build partnerships and perhaps even institutionalised partnerships with new partners such as the Chinese, the Brazilians, the Indians and the Turks. Yet after a year of trying, he realised how difficult it would be to deal with those people. Hence by one and a half years into the Obama administration, the president understood 'When the US needs help in the world, there is no better place to go than Europe'.⁹⁶

However, when the Libyan crisis subsided, American leaders began to re-evaluate the relationship with European allies under the framework of NATO. Putting aside that the US had no direct, first-order interests at stake in Libya, the US finally decided to join the campaign mainly because of the need to help its European allies. Robert Gates, then-Secretary of Defence, even complained that 'the mightiest military alliance in history is only 11 weeks into an operation against a poorly armed regime in a sparsely populated country. Yet many allies are beginning to run short of munitions, requiring the US, once more, to make up the difference'.⁹⁷ Gates then delivered a speech on reflections on the status and future of the transatlantic alliance when he left office, warning that NATO risked 'military irrelevance' unless spending would be increased by members other than the US.⁹⁸ There was a prominent concern that the US public would not stand for the imbalanced share of burdens much longer, leading to an urgent request for Europe to invest more capabilities.

It became more obvious that President Obama hesitated to remain as an Atlanticist in his second term, given that nothing had been mentioned about Europe in his second inaugural speech.⁹⁹ Moreover, when war loomed in Mali, America acquiesced in French intervention, demonstrating even less interest than it did in Libya. President

⁹⁶ Interview with Charles Kupchan, Whitney Shepardson Senior Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, 17 July 2012.

⁹⁷ Ian Traynor (2011) 'US Defence Chief Blasts Europe Over NATO', *The Guardian*, 10 June.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Barack Obama (2013) Second Inaugural Address, 21 January 2013.

Obama, who once committed more than 30,000 troops to the allied fight against the Taliban, even planned to withdraw almost all American troops from Afghanistan by the end of 2014. Thus, questions arose rapidly over whether Obama retreated to be an isolationist.¹⁰⁰ The truth is Obama, still staying on the liberal multilateral track, simply re-orientate America to face up to the rise of Asia rather than abandoning foreign commitments. During his trip to Australia in November 2011, President Obama said that ‘the Asia Pacific is critical to achieving my highest priority...As President, I have, therefore, made a deliberate and strategic decision—as a Pacific nation, the United States will play a larger and long-term role in shaping this region and its future, by upholding core principles and in close partnership with our allies and friends’.¹⁰¹ This was not empty rhetoric. He also declared a huge transfer of naval hardware toward the Pacific region. In June 2012, Leon Panetta, then-Secretary of Defence, told the annual Shangri-La Dialogue conference that ‘by 2020, the (US) navy will reposture its forces from today’s roughly 50-50% split between the Pacific and Atlantic to about a 60-40% between those oceans.’¹⁰² In addition, though Obama’s first trips as president were to Canada, Britain, France and Germany, he, after re-election, paid his first visit to Thailand, making himself the first serving US president to visit Burma and Cambodia. He also visited Japan and Indonesia twice and South Korea three times, reflecting not only an accelerated shift to the Pacific, but also a weakened tie with Europe. Furthermore, John Kerry, the Secretary of State and Chuck Hagel, the Secretary of Defence, who are both Vietnam veterans, strongly support the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

Although the current US foreign policy tends to focus more on the Asian Pacific region, it does not ignore Europe completely. On February 16, 2013, President Obama gave the annual state-of-the-union message to Congress, announcing that America and the EU would begin talks to create a transatlantic free-trade zone. This proposal was not new, but reemphasised how high Europe ranks on the list of American foreign policy. The debate about whether America is styling itself more as a Pacific than a European power in fact strengthens rather than weakens US attachment to the multilateralist approach. On one hand, the Obama doctrine continues to encourage US

¹⁰⁰ Freddy Gray (2013) ‘The Pacific President’, *The Spectator*, 19 January.

¹⁰¹ Barack Obama (2011) Remarks by President Obama to the Australian Parliament, 17 November.

¹⁰² ‘Leon Panetta: US to Deploy 60% of Navy Fleet to Pacific’, *BBC News*, 2 June 2012.

cooperation with Europe, though unilaterally asking for more European contribution to NATO. According to Keohane, the transaction costs of regime creation are much higher than the costs of regime maintenance. Therefore it is too hasty to say that America is going to abandon NATO or to create another institution to replace it.¹⁰³ On the other hand, by considering more concretely about US national interests, Obama expands the traditional multilateral framework to include one more coordinate besides Europe, resulting in his 'Pivot to Asia' strategy.

Historically US foreign policy has tended to swing between realism and liberal internationalism; yet the US final decision is not simply driven by either the realist or liberal internationalist approach because in actual political terms it is not obvious what distinguishes realists from liberal internationalists. President Clinton was a liberal internationalist in terms of his sponsorship of NATO enlargement, but he was also a realist when taking his reluctance in Bosnia and Kosovo into account. President Bush's bypassing of NATO in fighting the 'War on Terror' is often labelled himself as a unilateralist, yet he was also in favour of a multilateralist approach that guided America through talks with Iran and North Korea. Viewed as a follower of the Clinton doctrine that apparently absorbed liberal multilateralist aspirations, President Obama not only moves forward to enlarge the span of multilateralism by adding the 'Pivot to Asia' strategy, but also integrates US interests according to realist calculations to the making of American foreign policy. To sum up, though there might be a clear dividing line between realism and liberal multilateralism in theory, there is no such thing in practice. Influenced by both realist and liberal multilateralist aspirations, almost all administrations choose neither a pure realist nor pure liberal multilateralist approach. NATO, as a vital part of American foreign policy, has gone through twists and turns in the post-Cold War period. Critics about US commitments to the transatlantic alliance have never faded away. As Robert Gates warned, if European allies remain irresponsible, NATO will be relegated to the very margins of debate. However, as long as America dedicates itself to multilateralism, transatlantic relations are crucial to US foreign policy, given that the Atlantic Alliance might not be perfect, but it is the best thing going.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ See Robert Keohane (1984).

¹⁰⁴ Interview with Charles Kupchan.

3.4 Foreign Policy Analysis and the Bureaucratic Politics Model

‘Foreign policy as a field of study gets us to step inside the shoes of policy makers, enter their world, and then judge whether—in light of the context—they did the right thing (and for whom?)’.¹⁰⁵ The relevance of foreign policy to the study of international relations has attracted attention since the end of WWII. Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA), a flourishing approach in studying foreign policy, developed in the 1950s as an independent intellectual domain. By defining ‘foreign policy’ as ‘the sum of official external relations conducted by an independent actor (usually a state) in international relations’, Christopher Hill outlines the two extremes of what FPA should focus on.¹⁰⁶ The first approach, as he claimed, focuses purely on what diplomats say to each other; the second is a broader study that ‘include(s) almost everything that emanates from every actor on the world scene’.¹⁰⁷ According to Hill, the best solution is to find a balance between these two approaches.

Actually the question proposed by Hill has been the heart of debate since the foundation of FPA. Richard C. Snyder and his colleagues encouraged researchers to look below the nation-state level of analysis and to focus on the players involved. Viewing decision-making as ‘organisational behaviour’, they believed that desirable descriptions of behaviour were of necessity both multicausal and interdisciplinary.¹⁰⁸ James Rosenau took the same view, underscoring ‘the need to integrate information at several levels of analysis—from individual leaders to the international system—in understanding foreign policy’.¹⁰⁹ Harold and Margaret Sprout sought to link reality to the analysis of foreign policy by suggesting that ‘Foreign policy can only be explained with reference to the psycho-milieu (the psychological, situational, political,

¹⁰⁵ Steve Smith, Amelia Hadfield and Tim Dunne (ed.) (2008) *Foreign Policy: Theories, Actors, Cases*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 1.

¹⁰⁶ Christopher Hill (2003) *The Changing Politics of Foreign Policy*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 3.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ See Richard C. Snyder, H. W. Bruck, and Burton Sapin (1954) *Decision-Making as an Approach to the Study of International Politics*, Princeton: Princeton University Press; Valerie M. Hudson and Christopher S. Vore (1995) ‘Foreign Policy Analysis Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow’, *Mershon International Studies Review*, Vol. 39, No. 2, p. 213; and Valerie M. Hudson (2008) ‘The History and Evolution of Foreign Policy Analysis’ in Steve Smith, Amelia Hadfield and Tim Dunne (ed.) (2008) p. 13.

¹⁰⁹ See James Rosenau (1966) ‘Pre-theories and Theories of Foreign Policy’ in R. Barry Farrell (ed.) *Approaches to Comparative and International Politics*, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, pp. 27-52; Valerie M. Hudson and Christopher S. Vore (1995) p. 213; and Valerie M. Hudson (2008) p. 14.

and social contexts) of the individuals involved in the decision-making.’¹¹⁰ The combined message of these three works is that ‘multiple levels of analysis, ranging from the most micro to the most macro, should be integrated in the service of such theory building’.¹¹¹ The interpretation of this message, which ‘was and continues to be the hard core of FPA’, apparently suggests that this is not one approach to foreign policy but many.¹¹²

Previously most analysts tended to explain problems of foreign policy and the behaviour of national governments in terms of various forms of one basic conceptual model, the so-called Rational Policy/Actor Model. Since Richard Neustadt had his *Presidential Power: The Politics of Leadership* published in 1960, researchers have become interested in the bargaining nature of the governmental decision-making process. According to Neustadt, ‘Presidential power is the power to persuade’, thus the governmental process is one of inherent bargaining.¹¹³ Although Samuel Huntington, Warner Schilling, and Roger Hilsman had also described policy as a result of bargaining among the major participants, it was Graham Allison who made the notion of bureaucratic politics popular by formalising three decision-making models: the Rational Actor Model (Model I), the Organisational Behaviour Model (Model II), and the Bureaucratic/Governmental Politics Model (Model III).¹¹⁴ What Allison aimed at was to provide a base for improved explanation and prediction by introducing two alternative models in addition to the classic rational paradigm. His contribution has eventually become ‘one of the most widely disseminated concepts in all of social science.’¹¹⁵

¹¹⁰ See Harold H. Sprout, Margaret T. Sprout (1965), *Man-Milieu Relationship Hypotheses in the Context of International Politics*, Centre for International Studies, Princeton: Princeton University Press; Valerie M. Hudson and Christopher S. Vore (1995) p. 213; and Valerie M. Hudson (2008) p. 15.

¹¹¹ Valerie M. Hudson and Christopher S. Vore (1995) p. 214; Valerie M. Hudson (2008) p. 15.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Richard Neustadt (1960) *Presidential Power: The Politics of Leadership, With Reflections on Johnson and Nixon*, New York: Wiley, p. 10.

¹¹⁴ See Samuel P. Huntington (1961) *The Common Defence*, New York: Columbia University Press; Warner Schilling (1962) ‘The Politics of National Defence: Fiscal 1950’ in Warner Schilling, Paul Hammond, and Glenn Snyder (ed.) *Strategy, Politics, and Defence Budgets*, New York: Columbia University Press; Roger Hilsman (1967) *To Move a Nation*, New York: Delta Books; Graham T. Allison (1969) ‘Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis’, *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 63, No. 3, pp. 689-718; Graham T. Allison and Morton Halperin (1972) ‘Bureaucratic Politics: A Paradigm and Some Policy Implications’, *World Politics*, Vol. 24, Spring, pp. 40-79; Graham T. Allison (1971) *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, Boston: Little, Brown.

¹¹⁵ Robert Haffa (1977) ‘Allison’s Models: An Analytical Approach to Bureaucratic Politics’ in John

Allison firstly argued that political science and the study of international relations were saturated with rational-expectation theories inherited from the field of economics. Under such a view, the classic Rational Actor Model basically saw the nation or government as a 'rational unitary decision maker' that examined all options and acted rationally to maximise the utility.¹¹⁶ To ensure a state's action was 'a calculated solution to a strategic problem', this model originally assumed that government possessed 'knowledge of consequences that follow from the choice of each alternative', which enabled it to optimise its goals in 'narrowly constrained, neatly defined situations'.¹¹⁷ In short, the primary inference of this model was that 'if a nation performed a particular action, that nation must have had ends towards which the action constituted an optimal means'.¹¹⁸ However Allison questioned the applicability of this model to policy-making behaviour because 'an imaginative analyst can construct an account of value-maximising choice for any action or set of actions performed by a government'.¹¹⁹ He noticed that analysts had to ignore many facts to make their analysis fit this classic model. According to Allison, the problem of Model I was 'not simply to find an objective or cluster of objectives around which a story of value-maximizing choice can be constructed, but to insist on rules of evidence for making assertions about governmental objectives, options, and consequences that permit him to distinguish among the various accounts'.¹²⁰ For example, by using this model, the motive behind the attack on Pearl Harbor would be that Japan would never dare attack because it would lose a war with the US; and nobody would start a nuclear war given the knowledge of its consequences. But human beings were not inextricably bound to act in a rational manner. Therefore, Allison concluded that using the Rational Actor Model was dangerous because people would make unreliable assumptions about reality.

Allison next turned to Model II, namely the Organisational Process Model, under which 'government consists of a conglomerate of semi-feudal, loosely allied

Endicott and Roy Stafford (ed.) *American Defence Policy*, 4th ed., Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, p. 224.

¹¹⁶ Graham T. Allison (1969) p. 694.

¹¹⁷ Graham T. Allison (1971) pp. 13, 29-30.

¹¹⁸ Graham T. Allison (1969) p. 694.

¹¹⁹ Graham T. Allison (1971) p. 35.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

organisations, each with a substantial life of its own'.¹²¹ After dividing primary responsibility into particular areas, 'Each organisation attends to a special set of problems and acts in quasi-independence on these problems.'¹²² Coordination of these organisations was required, which could be achieved through standard operating procedures (SOPs). Thus 'The behaviour of these organisations—and consequently of the government—relevant to an issue in any particular instance was, therefore, determined primarily by routines established in these organisations.'¹²³ In this model, policy was described as the output of organisational processes and behaviour was 'determined by previously established procedures'.¹²⁴ The dominant pattern of inference in Allison's Model II was that 'if a nation performs an action of a certain type today, its organisational components must yesterday have been performing (or have had established routines for performing) an action only marginally different from today's action'.¹²⁵ Considering that SOPs were not 'far-sighted' or 'flexible', organisational actions were predominantly determined by organisational routines, not governmental leaders' directions. In short, 'with its emphasis on routine, Model II could not explain change'.¹²⁶ This, according to Allison, decreased the adaptability of this model by broadening the gap between 'what leaders choose (or might rationally have chosen) and what organisations implement'.¹²⁷ What Allison truly proposed was that administrative feasibility should be included as a major dimension, implying further development of decision-making models.

As a result, Allison introduced his Model III, the so-called Bureaucratic Politics Model. This model saw the leaders of organisations, rather than a 'monolithic group', as a player in his own rights in a 'central, competitive game' named bureaucratic politics: 'bargaining along regularised channels among players positioned hierarchically within the government'.¹²⁸ In contrast with the classic Rational Actor Model, the Bureaucratic Politics Model saw 'no unitary actor but rather many actors as players—players who focus not on a single strategic issue but on many diverse

¹²¹ Graham T. Allison (1969) p. 698.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 699.

¹²⁵ Graham T. Allison (1971) p. 87.

¹²⁶ Lawrence Freedman (1976) 'Logic, Politics and Foreign Policy Processes: A Critique of the Bureaucratic Politics Model', *International Affairs*, Vol. 52, No. 3, p. 435.

¹²⁷ Graham T. Allison (1969) p. 703.

¹²⁸ Ibid., p. 707.

intra-national problems as well; players who act in terms of no consistent set of strategic objectives but rather according to various conceptions of national, organisational, and personal goals; players who make government decisions not by a single, rational choice but by the pulling and hauling that is politics'.¹²⁹ Thus Government behaviour could be understood as the result of bargaining games rather than organisational outputs, in other words, policies, as 'essentially intra-national political outcomes' resulted from 'compromise, coalition, competition and confusion among government officials who see different faces of an issue'.¹³⁰ Hence the inference of this model was straightforward: 'If a nation performed an action, that action was the resultant of bargaining among individuals and groups within the government.'¹³¹ In Allison and Halperin's co-authored article 'Bureaucratic Politics: A Paradigm and Some Policy Implications' and Halperin's book *Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy*, the Bureaucratic Politics Model had been further consolidated by incorporating sufficient empirical evidences regarding the US foreign and security policy, while reemphasising the backbone of this model—'What a government does in any particular instance can be understood largely as a result of bargaining among players positioned hierarchically in the government.'¹³²

Edward Rhodes summarised Allison and Halperin's observation, indicating that Model III mainly answered four specific questions in order to predict state behaviour: 'Who plays? What are their interests? What is their relative strength? And what are the rules under which participants interact?'¹³³ In this model, individuals were regarded as players, whose positions in the government were the key, given that 'the advantages and handicaps with which each player can enter and play in various games stems from his position'.¹³⁴ According to Allison, 'positions define what players both may and must do', hence 'propensities of perception stemming from position permit reliable prediction about a player's stances in many cases'.¹³⁵ In other words, players' interests were principally associated with the position they occupy. The ability of

¹²⁹ Graham T. Allison (1971) p. 144.

¹³⁰ Graham T. Allison (1969) pp. 707-708.

¹³¹ Graham T. Allison (1971) p. 173.

¹³² Graham T. Allison and Morton H. Halperin (1972) p. 43.

¹³³ Edward Rhodes (1994) 'Do Bureaucratic Politics Matter?: Some Disconfirming Findings from the Case of the US Navy', *World Politics*, Vol. 47, No. 1, p. 7.

¹³⁴ Graham T. Allison (1969) p. 709.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

players to advance their interests reflected their relative power, which in this context was ‘an elusive blend of at least three elements: bargaining advantages (drawn from formal authority and obligations, institutional backing, constituents, expertise, and status), skill and will in using bargaining advantages, and other players’ perceptions of the first two ingredients’.¹³⁶ For the rules under which players interacted, Model III emphasised that bargaining games, far from being unpredictable, proceeded in a highly structured way. Allison believed that ‘the individuals whose stands and moves count are the players whose positions hook them on to the action-channels’.¹³⁷ Therefore, regularised ‘action-channels structure the game by preselecting the major players, determining their usual points of entrance into the game, and disturbing particular advantages and disadvantages for each game’.¹³⁸

As was typical of a popular concept, much criticism had been levelled at Allison’s Model III. Milton Friedman, ‘the most influential economist of the second half of the 20th century (Keynes died in 1946), possibly of all of it’ and an economic adviser to President Ronald Reagan, countered Allison from the perspective of instrumentalism, arguing that although the rational policy paradigms did not describe the reality *per se*, they should be retained since they provide accurate predictions.¹³⁹ But Friedman did not provide enough evidence to support the fact that his theories could accurately predict possibility, which was criticised as ‘unscientific’ by Allison in turn. Friedman continued to counter that the Bureaucratic Politics Model was impractical because it required a very large amount of information. Although it was true that compared with the other models, the Rational Actor Model ‘serves as a productive shorthand, requiring a minimum of information’¹⁴⁰, Allison refused to agree there was any necessity to automatically revert to those rational policy paradigms, taking into account that rationalistic thinking might be flawed—‘You can sit in your armchair and try to predict how people will behave by asking how you would behave if you had your wits about you. You get, free of charge, a lot of vicarious, empirical

¹³⁶ Ibid., p. 710.

¹³⁷ Graham T. Allison (1971) p. 169.

¹³⁸ Ibid., p. 170.

¹³⁹ ‘A Heavyweight Champ, at Five Foot Two: the Legacy of Milton Friedman, A Giant among Economists’, *The Economist*, 23 November 2006. Graham T. Allison (1971) p. 75.

¹⁴⁰ Graham T. Allison and Morton H. Halperin (1972) p. 42.

behaviour'.¹⁴¹ However, Jonathan Bendor and Thomas H. Hammond also complained that Allison's Model III lacked absolute clarity about whether players were required to be rational actors, which disabled the model to derive testable propositions.¹⁴² David A. Welch nonetheless helped defend Model III in his reading of Allison's works, suggesting that 'Model III did not suppose that the individual players behaved irrationally in the games in which they participated, merely that the net effect of those games was to deflect state behaviour from the course that would have been chosen by a unitary rational actor'.¹⁴³ Further, there was always a wide gap between academic literature and the experience of participants in government. The decision on which paradigm of the rational actor and the bureaucratic politics should be adopted largely depends on whether it recognised and even bridged the gap between theoretical guess and reality. In fact, as Lawrence Freedman concluded, the Rational Actor Model and Allison's Bureaucratic Politics Model should be best understood 'not as opposing conceptual frameworks but simply as alternative models of a political system that are not necessarily incompatible and, at least in theory, can be evaluated by reference to evidence'.¹⁴⁴ In short, as stated in their cooperative work, what Allison and Halperin tended to contribute was to 'present an alternative approach that focuses on intra-national factors, in particular Bureaucratic Politics, in explaining national behaviour in international relations'.¹⁴⁵

Serving as 'an analytical breakthrough that recognises a critical variable in the determination of policy that has hitherto been neglected by most analysts', Allison's Model inspired numerous works concerned with US foreign policy to utilise this approach in their description of the policy process.¹⁴⁶ The core metaphor of Allison's original model was that of the game, focusing on what and how the *outcome/policy*

¹⁴¹ Thomas C. Schelling (1966), *Arms and Influence*, New Haven: Yale University Press, p. 150.

¹⁴² Jonathan Bendor and Thomas H. Hammond (1992) 'Rethinking Allison's Models', *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 86, No. 2, p. 304.

¹⁴³ David A. Welch (1992) 'The Organisational Process and Bureaucratic Politics Paradigms: Retrospect and Prospect', *International Security*, Vol. 17, No. 2, p. 118.

¹⁴⁴ Lawrence Freedman (1976) p. 436.

¹⁴⁵ Graham T. Allison and Morton H. Halperin (1972) p. 42.

¹⁴⁶ Lawrence Freedman (1976) p. 434. Also see William I. Bacchus (1974) *Foreign Policy and the Bureaucratic Process: The State Department's Country Director System*, Princeton: Princeton University Press; I. M. Destler (1974) *Presidents, Bureaucrats, and Foreign Policy: The Politics of Organisational Reform*, Princeton: Princeton University Press; Francis E. Rourke (ed.) (1978) *Bureaucratic Power in National Politics*, Boston: Little Brown; John Spanier and Eric M. Uslaner (1978) *How American Foreign Policy is Made*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

decision was achieved. Individual players with various differences in characteristics occupied particular positions within the government. Their perceptions and preferences led the players to define their interests and objectives of any single issue, which therefore determined their stands. Those players were often cited as ‘senior players’ who ‘have a disproportionate share of influence on major decisions’.¹⁴⁷ In developing the paradigm, Allison and Halperin further introduced the *action* games, most of which were participated in by ‘junior players’ who sat around the central circle of senior players. Considering that ‘action-channels determine, in large part, which players enter what games, with what advantages and handicaps’, junior players always played a major role in carrying out the decision rather than dominating the decision games.¹⁴⁸ For example, although “‘Congressional influential”, members of the press, spokesmen for important interest groups, especially the “bipartisan foreign policy establishment” in and out of Congress, and surrogates for each of these groups’ could hardly determine the decision-making, they nonetheless exerted considerable influence on how the governmental behaviour might be perceived.¹⁴⁹

In practice, US government is composed of numerous individuals, many of whom work in large organisations. In comprehending the environment where it has to operate, each organisation has to ‘address itself to the whole set of shared assumptions, images and facts that determine the prevalent concept of the “national interest”’.¹⁵⁰ This responsibility is assigned to actors in terms of the strength of their position rather than any claim to rationality. However, there is no preponderant player. Even the President is merely one participant rather than a dominator, although he may have the most influential power. According to Allison, the President is only one of many chiefs comprising of ‘the President, the Secretaries of State, Defence, and Treasury, the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and, since 1961, the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs’.¹⁵¹ The final decision is actually a ‘political resultant’ achieved through bargaining and compromising among participants. In other words, to speak of US foreign policy, ‘is really to speak of a number of foreign policy decisions determined by competition among a number of

¹⁴⁷ Graham T. Allison and Morton H. Halperin (1972) p. 47.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Lawrence Freedman (1976) p. 446.

¹⁵¹ Graham T. Allison (1971) p. 164.

actors'.¹⁵² As a result, most players see themselves only as 'inputters, recommenders, vetoers and approvers' instead of decision-makers.¹⁵³ More often there are competing options, each with their own costs and benefits, yet bureaucratic politics is not a necessary condition for policy in cohesion because 'in fact all bureaucratic politicians can do is to exploit the inherent problems of policy formation through the manipulation of communication flows and policy debates.'¹⁵⁴ Therefore, this 'pulling and hauling' among the various participants who attempt to advance their understanding of 'national interest' in turn guarantees a full range of rational options for the government to choose.

Foreign Policy Analysis, although not the only approach to the study of foreign policy, has evolved into a significant approach by drawing heavily on ideas and concepts found in International Relations theories. Based on the core realist state-centric assumption, the classic Rational Actor Model traditionally regards the state as the central foreign policy actor, which has inspired researchers to focus on predictions of foreign policy outputs. Yet the reliability of this model has been under question, given the embarrassment that only complete information can lead to accurate prediction. As a result, Allison proposes his Bureaucratic Politics Model as an alternative FPA theme, which has bequeathed to FPA its characteristic emphasis on decision-making process rather than foreign policy outcomes only. After analysing the US foreign policy at the macro level (which is discussed above in the second section of this chapter), further explanations on decision-making should take place at the micro level—bureaucratic politics. Thus the 'pulling and hauling' among players becomes vital to understand why the US pursues certain foreign policy, who might influence it, and how it is conceived.

¹⁵² Paul R. Viotti and Mark V. Kauppi (1999) *International Relations Theory: Realism, Pluralism, Globalism, and Beyond*, Boston: Allyn and Bacon, p. 8.

¹⁵³ Roger Hilsman (1959) 'The Foreign Policy Consensus: An Interim Report', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 3, No. 4, p. 373.

¹⁵⁴ Lawrence Freedman (1976) p. 438.

Chapter 4: The Clinton Administration's Recommitment to NATO

4.1 Introduction

In the immediate aftermath of the Cold War, a range of choices for the future directions of US foreign policy presented themselves. On one hand, most Americans believed that it was time for the US to focus on domestic affairs rather than continuing with more international commitments. The Soviet threat had already subsided, suggesting there was no need for the US to keep on providing security protection for European countries. Moreover, there was never a possession of infinite power, thus 'the US could not function as a diplomatic Atlas, bearing the entire world upon its shoulders'.¹ American people had suffered a lot from the Cold War, hence they wished to see the administration making efforts to build prosperity at home. On the other hand, it was also widely accepted that the US should take the collapse of the Soviet Union as an unprecedented opportunity to rise as the only superpower or even 'the policeman of the world'. This idea mainly came from those who assessed that 'if the US did not take the lead in efforts to preserve international peace and security, then what nations are in a position, and have incentive, to do so?'² According to them, only the US had the power and force-projection capability needed to shoulder and implement global responsibilities. In short, they supported the administration to increase its international commitments in the post-Cold War period. In this chapter, the author discusses US recommitment to NATO in this context of post-Cold War policy choice.

Between the extremes of isolationist withdrawal and global policeman, it seemed likely that the favoured policy would be one that recognised the dynamics of global political and economic interdependence and integration. Deeply committed to the

¹ Cecil V. Crabb, Jr., Leila E. Saredine and Glenn J. Antizzo (2001) *Charting A New Diplomatic Course: Alternative Approaches to America's Post-Cold War Foreign Policy*, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, p. 3.

² Ibid., p. 5.

doctrine of (especially economic) globalisation, the Clinton administration eventually chose a course of cooperation with other countries to police the international system. This course was apparently the desirable middle between these two extremes, which not only demonstrated great selectivity in how to engage in international affairs but also met the need to show US leadership. Perhaps one of the reasons was because the US needed the tangible and intangible support of its allies throughout the international community if it is to accomplish worthwhile purposes. With regard to this, a proper way to achieve this balance would be working through NATO, an alliance that had witnessed enormous successful cooperation between Washington and its European allies. However, NATO faced severe challenges to its survival after the end of the Cold War, making it difficult for the US to utilise the Alliance to pursue its foreign policy.

In May 1990, NATO's Military Committee announced that it no longer considered the Warsaw Pact a threat to the Alliance. President George H.W. Bush then called for cuts in NATO and Warsaw Pact force levels, which would eventually result in significant reductions in funding and force levels for NATO's conventional and nuclear forces. Many other changes came along with the cuts in defence spending and force strength: the US leadership in NATO receded; policy disputes among members about security issues increased; and more attention was given to other security organisations other than NATO. All these seemed to coincide with neorealist predictions that NATO, an alliance built up because of a common threat, would undoubtedly disappear with the collapse of the Soviet Union. Yet, no matter how thoroughly those neorealists speculated about how an alliance would come to its end, NATO expanded rather than disbanded. It became a more active and vibrant organisation that was expanding its scope and membership. Needless to say, without the Clinton administration's support, NATO would not have survived in the post-Cold War era.

The presidency of Bill Clinton was 'the very warp and weft of contemporary US politics'.³ The Clinton administration took office less than two years after the collapse

³ John Dumbrell (2009) *Clinton's Foreign Policy: Between the Bushes, 1992-2000*, London: Routledge, p. 1.

of the Soviet Union, and the administration's foreign policy addressed conflicts in Somalia, Rwanda, Bosnia, Kosovo and Haiti. Whether Clinton was a good foreign policy president was controversial.⁴ The extraordinarily fluid nature of the post-Cold War policy-making context made Clinton's foreign policy process complicated. Clinton was the president who faced unprecedented political opposition in 1994 when Republicans took control of both Houses of Congress. This decisive victory for Republicans was heavily attributed to the release of the Contract with America, which became a blueprint for the policy of the new Congressional majority. According to John Micklethwait and Adrian Wooldridge, the Contract placed the Clinton White House firmly on the defensive.⁵ Since then, President Clinton had striven against the difficulty to cooperate with a Congress that was dominated by Republicans for six years. Specifically, liberals in Congress often urged Clinton to take military action, yet the President was reluctant to situate himself at the centre of the foreign policy process during early years of his presidency. Moreover, a post-Vietnam War, post-Cold War Pentagon was often cautious about military action, making it harder for Clinton to establish a reasonable working relationship with the US military.⁶

Despite Clinton's personal and political vulnerabilities, he succeeded in issuing policy toward the old enemies, which aimed to assimilate instead of eliminate former Warsaw Pact members. As John Dumbrell argued, 'NATO enlargement was a major Clinton success'.⁷ It clearly demonstrated how Clinton's foreign policy was a response to the changing post-Cold War domestic and international conditions. The President's determination was apparently a driving force for NATO expansion, but it is also worth noting that pressures from the US pro-expansionist ethnic lobbies played an important role to push forward NATO enlargement. Particularly the Polish-, Hungarian-, and Czech-Americans created a strong domestic group in favour of NATO expansion, which certainly became part of the evolving dynamics. The influence of the ethnic communities seemed unquestionable, as the end of the Cold War in part opened up the policy-making environment in a way that favoured

⁴ Views on Clinton's record as a world leader have been sharply divided. Where supporters saw pragmatic leadership and bold innovation, critics saw improvised initiatives that had left the US adrift. See 'Clinton's Foreign Policy', *Foreign Policy*, No. 121, Nov-Dec 2000.

⁵ John Micklethwait and Adrian Wooldridge (2004) *The Right Nation: Why America is Different*, London: Penguin Books.

⁶ John Dumbrell (2009).

⁷ Ibid., p. 167.

domestic lobbies. More importantly, active response to the ethnic lobbies could help increase Clinton's popularity in the pro-expansionist ethnic constituencies. However, the true influence of ethnic lobbies might be exaggerated because after all, those ethnic communities were so tiny that they might lack ability to place significant impact on US foreign policy-making. As with this debate, it is tempting to trace other factors with evenhandedness to the ethnic lobbies that had influenced the Clinton administration's policy on NATO expansion.

This chapter aims to understand the Clinton administration's recommitment to NATO after the end of the Cold War, focusing on how the decision on NATO enlargement was made. To be specific, it analyses why, how and when NATO expanded in the post-Cold War era, and which countries could gain the membership of NATO in the first place. To understand the US decision-making, this chapter adopts a 'bureaucratic politics' focus, with particular emphasis on 'pulling and hauling' among the president, the National Security Council, the State Department, and the Pentagon. Finally, the chapter also underlines the debate raised immediately after the first round of NATO enlargement, questioning whether NATO would further expand in the following years.

4.2 Why should NATO expand?

On the issue of NATO enlargement, the question of 'why' came first. The answer to this question would not only provide the rationale for NATO expansion, but also lay a solid foundation for further discussions about 'how' and 'when' NATO could expand, and 'who' might become potential candidates.

4.2.1 NATO expansion would serve both European and American interests

Central and Eastern Europe Charles W. Freeman, Assistant Secretary of Defence for Regional Security Affairs, took the reverse deduction approach by asking an inspiring question that 'If expansion is the answer, what is the question?' He saw the question of NATO expansion equal to the question of 'how to build a security architecture to manage problems across Europe', indicating that NATO expansion would, first of all,

meet European countries' interests.⁸ By definition, NATO enlargement refers to expansion towards Central and Eastern European countries, most of which belong to the former Soviet bloc. Thus whether those Soviet allies were willing to join NATO, or in other words, whether NATO expansion could meet those aspirants' interests, became fundamental to address the question whether the Alliance should move eastward. NATO was originally designed as an organisation of shared interests and values, focusing on protection against Soviet attack and the promotion of democracy and peaceful relations among its member states. Although the Soviet threat had subsided since the end of the Cold War, no one could be confident that Russia would become part of the new order and would not re-emerge as a threat to the West any time soon. As Secretary of State Warren Christopher observed, if Russian democracy collapsed Washington would face a very insecure future indeed with the strong 'possibility of a renewed nuclear threat, higher defence budgets, spreading instability, the loss of new markets and a devastating setback for the worldwide democratic movement'.⁹ Thus, former Soviet republics perceived NATO membership foremost as 'an insurance policy against a resurgent Russia'.¹⁰

Further, a 'new definition' of threat was put forward at the Rome Summit in 1991, clarifying that in addition to the aggression of Russia, future threats would come from instabilities arising from economic, social, and political difficulties.¹¹ With respect to those principal security challenges, if aspirant Central and Eastern European countries were allowed to become members of NATO, it would create a 'win-win' situation for both existing and new member states of NATO. On one hand, those aspirants would gain the same US protection as those Western European countries had received since 1949 in connection with the post-war recovery; on the other hand, absorbing former Warsaw Pact satellites into the Alliance would help consolidate the continuing relevance and desirability of a transatlantic alliance in the redefined security environment, as those candidates would be encouraged to reform until democracy was

⁸ James Goldgeier (1999) *Not Whether But When: The US Decision to Enlarge NATO*, Washington: Brookings Institution Press.

⁹ Warren Christopher (1993) 'Securing US Interests While Supporting Russian Reform', *US Department of State Dispatch*, Vol. 4, No. 13, March. Michael Cox (1994) 'The Necessary Partnership? The Clinton Presidency and Post-Soviet Russia', *International Affairs*, Vol. 70, No. 4, p. 643.

¹⁰ Luca Ratti (2009) 'Back to the Future? International Relations Theory and NATO-Russia Relations Since the End of the Cold War', *International Journal*, Vol. 64, No. 2, p. 420.

¹¹ The Rome Summit, 1991.

achieved. In other words, NATO enlargement could provide security guarantee for nations that had often been sacrificed to great power politics in the past, and could bring the sense of belonging to those new members so that they could voluntarily become 'contributors' rather than 'consumers' to develop peace and prosperity within the Alliance.

Western Europe Despite the fact that NATO enlargement would satisfy the Central and Eastern European countries that were eager to 'anchor themselves in the West and "return to Europe"', would NATO expansion simultaneously meet existing European members' interests?¹² Immediately after the end of the Cold War, not many NATO members saw expansion as a necessary option, as they viewed NATO enlargement as a unilateralist American policy, believing that the US was pursuing hegemony in the post-Cold War period. Taking into account these accusations, President Clinton was not very determined to demonstrate a continuing US international leadership, though both the Republican majority and the Democratic minority had pressured him to do so for quite a long time.¹³ Moreover, many Western European countries believed that priority should be given to promoting the development of a democratic, peaceful Russia, and that expanding NATO would conflict with this objective. Those European members saw it as significant to help Russia adapt to the new order, yet they might be too optimistic to neglect the uncertainty over whether Russia was more likely to reform or to remain as an unstable and potentially unfriendly power. The Russian response to the rebellion in Chechnya soon reaffirmed the view of those who insisted on keeping a watchful eye on Moscow, as Russia might not become a gentler European democracy very quickly. European members did not acknowledge the necessity of NATO enlargement until the outbreak of the Bosnia conflict, which warned the European countries of the unstable security environment. Although the initial European approach to Bosnia led to 'a feeling on the part of people that NATO (was) irrelevant', the failure of European governments either to accept US prescriptions for handling the crisis or to assume responsibility for solving it themselves eventually proved that an 'active' US leadership in the Alliance was the

¹² Andrew A. Michta (2009) 'NATO Enlargement Post-1989: Successful Adaption or Decline?', *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 18, No. 3, p. 366.

¹³ Stanley Sloan (1995) 'US Perspectives on NATO's Future', *International Affairs*, Vol. 71, No. 2, p. 217.

key to guarantee successful operations and thus reassured the capability of NATO in dealing with crises.¹⁴

According to Article Five of the NATO charter, an attack on any member of the Alliance would be an attack on all, but since Bosnia was not a member of NATO, then why was NATO still relevant if what appeared to be a more typical post-Cold War conflict was outside its jurisdiction? Given that most governments preferred to firstly concentrate on their own domestic affairs and were always reluctant to use force, there was neither much knowledge of nor interest in an organisation like NATO to deal with conflicts abroad. Even the US restrained its military participation by claiming NATO as the only multilateral organisation under which American military forces should be permitted to operate.¹⁵ Bosnia brought forward the question of whether the transatlantic alliance remained relevant to the security challenge of the post-Cold War world, the answer to which largely depended on whether the member states continued to believe that their interests would require their cooperation to respond to future crises. As a result, what quickly spread throughout European members after Bosnia was the acknowledgement that there was a continuing relevance for NATO in the post-Cold War world, and that NATO expansion would be an effective way to help strengthen NATO and in the end, to solve future 'Bosnias'.

America The US has played a dominant role in the transatlantic alliance, thus without US support, NATO would not survive, much less expand. There were equally important divisions on the question of whether the US should promote NATO enlargement. Some Americans including General John Shalikashvili, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Les Aspin, Secretary of Defence, emphasised that although they understood why new membership served the interests of the Europeans, they did not see how it served American interests.¹⁶ Others like Vice President Al Gore responded that the security of the states lying between Western Europe and Russia affected the security of America, arguing that NATO expansion would meet US

¹⁴ John Darnton (1994) 'Dole, in London, Urges Air Strikes Against the Serbs', *The New York Times*, 1 December.

¹⁵ 'Contract with America', *House Republican Conference*, 27 September 1994.

¹⁶ Adam Garfinkle (1997) 'Losing One's Head over NATO', *Quadrant*, Vol. 41, No. 9, pp. 65-68.

interests.¹⁷ Ideally, with the advent of globalisation, every state was more interdependent with each other, regardless of geographic constraints.¹⁸ And even in terms of traditional geopolitical considerations, both the intimate ties between the US and its European allies and the sensitive US-Russian relationship implied that as long as there were shared security concerns among NATO members, including the potential threat from Moscow, it would be necessary and crucial for the US to support the transatlantic alliance's persistence. In other words, proponents of enlargement saw NATO as 'a benign institution representing Western "security community" that serves to promote trust and foster cooperation among its members'.¹⁹

Moreover, in addition to primary concerns over security issues, the US attitude towards NATO in the post-Cold War era was also highly influenced by consideration of many other national interests. First of all, given the pressure coming from both inside and outside of America, the Clinton administration wanted to demonstrate US leadership. The abrupt collapse of the Soviet Union marked the disappearance of one of the two polar states during the Cold War, suggesting that for the first time in its history, America enjoyed circumstance in which no other power imposed credible military threats to its core national interests. Ideally, this created an unprecedented opportunity for the US to unfold its global strategy, especially to fill the strategic vacuum in Central Europe. However, for the time being, the US seemed neither ready nor willing to provide international leadership. Instead, it moved to adopt an approach towards international involvement that could be characterised as 'self-deterrence'.²⁰ Although the Clinton administration did not withdraw to an isolationist posture, it announced US domestic prosperity as a key 'pillar' of its foreign policy, declining to increase the international commitments. This approach, though it highlighted the importance for any government of improving the economic fortunes of its citizens, undermined the traditional value base for US foreign policy. Thereby, most

¹⁷ Vice President Gore (1994) 'Forging a Partnership for Peace and Prosperity', *US Department of State Dispatch*, Vol. 5, No. 2, p. 13.

¹⁸ President Clinton was regarded as the 'globalisation president'. He understood more profoundly than many other leaders that globalisation was not simply a trendy buzzword, nothing that 'Everything from the strength of our economy, to the safety of our cities, to the health of our people depends on events not only within our border but half a world away'. See 'Clinton's Foreign Policy', Elisabeth Shogren (1999) 'US Must Be World Player, Clinton Says', *The Los Angeles Times*, 27 February.

¹⁹ Andrew Kydd (2001) 'Trust Building, Trust Breaking: The Dilemma of NATO Enlargement', *International Organisation*, Vol. 55, No. 4, p. 802.

²⁰ Stanley Sloan (1994) 'The United States and the Use of Force in the Post-Cold War World: Towards Self-Deterrence', *CRS Report for the Congress*, 20 July.

Republicans and ethnic communities including the Polish-, Hungarian-, and Czech-Americans in the US urged President Clinton to show US leadership rather than pleasing Russia blindly.²¹ Specifically, leaders of the new Republican majority in Congress weighed in on this issue, calling for a more active US leadership as well as the renewal of the US commitment to a stronger NATO.²² The debate over future directions for US foreign policy also attracted attention abroad, especially after the Bosnia conflict which reemphasised that even in the absence of the Soviet threat, US leadership tailored to the new security realities would remain essential both to a stable European security system and to international stability more generally. Thus the Clinton administration not only noticed the great need to demonstrate US leadership in the post-Cold War period, but also affirmed a stronger NATO as the most appropriate platform for the US to remain the framework for transatlantic defence cooperation.

In broader terms, acting as the leader, the US would be able to exert more influence on the other states, particularly on potential NATO membership candidates. This would meet another American interest—promoting democracy in Central and Eastern Europe, which could enhance global peace and prosperity. According to Luca Ratti, cooperation with NATO would encourage democratic reforms in former Soviet republics.²³ Hence, guided by the traditional liberal internationalist approach, the US has always regarded it as a duty to help other countries transform into democratic ones. There was no exception to President Clinton whose Wilsonian orientation was evident in his desire to spread democracy internationally.²⁴ When Clinton gave his speech for the opening of the US Holocaust Memorial Museum on April 21, 1993, he expressed his hope that ‘the seeds of democracy in Europe will one day soon bear the fruit of a more peaceful civic culture’. Moreover, since countries including Croatia, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Albania and Moldova all participated in the opening, Clinton saw it as a chance to properly convey

²¹ ‘Ethnic communities in the US’ mainly referred to the Polish, Hungarian and Czech Americans.

²² ‘Contract with America’, *House Republican Conference*, 27 September 1994.

²³ Luca Ratti (2009) p. 420.

²⁴ John Dumbrell and David Barrett (1997) *The Making of US Foreign Policy*, Manchester: Manchester University Press. Michael Cox (2000) ‘Wilsonianism Resurgent? The Clinton administration and the Promotion of Democracy’, in Michael Cox, John Ikenberry and Takashi Inoguchi (ed.) (2000) *American Democracy Promotion: Impulses, Strategies, and Impacts*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 218-240. Robert Litwak (2007) *Regime Change: US Strategy through the Prism of 9/11*, Washington: Woodrow Wilson Centre Press.

US policy on Europe: 'the United States will remain fully engaged in Europe and in its transitions toward a new and better future'.²⁵ Charles Gati, a specialist on Central and Eastern Europe, warned that new democracies were so fragile that the ex-communists were likely to gain power again. But, for example, if NATO assisted Poland in carrying out successful reforms, this would create a huge positive effect on the rest of the region.²⁶ Stephen Flanagan, a policy planning staff member in the George H.W. Bush administration also agreed that the prospect of NATO membership would be a huge incentive for reformers in the East.²⁷ Characterised as Wilsonians, Clinton and Anthony Lake, the National Security Adviser, believed that creating democracy, a market economy, civilian control over the military, and border treaties would lead to peace and prosperity, but more importantly, enlarging the community of democratic, market-oriented states could enhance America's national security.

Besides the spread of democracy in Central and Eastern Europe, the US simultaneously attached great importance to the security protection of its 'old' European allies. Beyond the Soviet threat, another major factor giving NATO an important place in US foreign policy has been the goal of promoting internal European stability. Actually since the establishment of NATO, Washington has accepted that the US presence in Europe plays a constructive stabilising role within Western Europe, hoping to avoid a revival of internal Western European conflicts that had already led to two world wars.²⁸ Hence perhaps most apparently, NATO enlargement would help prevent the potential German problem from happening. There has long been a group of Europeans who worried about the revival of German militarism. They thought the chief threat to peace in Central and Eastern Europe was the renationalisation of German foreign policy, so they wished to convince Germany that instability to its east was unlikely and did not need to be dealt with unilaterally. The possible and quick resolution to this potential German problem was to move the eastern border of NATO to the eastern border of Poland, thus centring Germany in the

²⁵ President Clinton (1993) 'Remarks at a Reception for the Opening of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum', 21 April.

²⁶ Ronald Asmus (2002) *Opening NATO's Door: How the Alliance Remade Itself for A New Era*, Columbia University Press, p. 43 and James Goldgeier (1999) p. 31.

²⁷ Stephen Flanagan (1992) 'NATO and Central and Eastern Europe: From Liaison to Security Partnership', *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 15, No. 2, pp. 142, 149-50.

²⁸ Stanley Sloan (1994) p. 219.

alliance rather than leaving it on the flank. On the other hand, Germany also saw this proposal as being beneficial. Volker Ruehe, German Defence Minister, once expressed the view that it would be beneficial to have Poland included in NATO so that Germany would no longer serve as the Alliance's eastern border.²⁹

Last but not least, by NATO expansion, the US wanted to encourage Russia to reform rather than to humiliate or provoke Russia. In his news conference with President Yeltsin in Vancouver in April 1993, Clinton emphasised that the US would not stand on the sidelines when it came to democracy in Russia. He further assured Yeltsin that 'We actively support reform and reformers and you in Russia' and that mutually reinforcing steps would be taken to strengthen reform in Russia.³⁰ The Clinton administration gave priority to the development of a healthy US-Russian relationship rather than to endless confrontation. However, Clinton's sponsorship for NATO expansion was an ambivalent policy that left the way towards future peaceful coexistence between Washington and Moscow clouded and contentious. Serious suspicion as well as criticism firstly arose within the US. For example, John Lewis Gaddis argued that NATO enlargement was 'ill-conceived, ill-timed, and above all ill-suited to the realities of the post-Cold War world'.³¹ George F. Kennan was also strongly opposed to NATO expansion, on the grounds that it would damage beyond repair US efforts to turn Russia from enemy to partner.³² Certainly America should trust and encourage Russia to reform, but this did not mean there was no need to maintain vigilance against the possible non-peaceful rise of Russia, after all, Russia was down but not out. There remained many uncertainties about whether Moscow would become part of the West or revive as a threat again. In spite of the anti-Russian bias, Republican Senator Richard Lugar stated that enlargement was not inconsistent

²⁹ 'Bonn Wants East in Updated NATO', *International Herald Tribune*, 8 October 1993, p. 6. Ruehe was initially opposed NATO enlargement, yet by January 1993 there were clear indications that his opinion on the subject was changing. In a key-note speech to the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies in March 1993, he argued that the Atlantic Alliance 'must not become a "close shop"', and the future members of the EU should not be denied membership of NATO. Quoted in Adrian Hyde-Price (2000) *Germany and European Order*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, p. 150.

³⁰ President Clinton (1993) 'The President's New Conference with President Boris Yeltsin of Russia in Vancouver', 4 April.

³¹ John Lewis Gaddis (1998) 'History, Grand Strategy and NATO Enlargement', *Survival*, Vol. 40, No. 1, p. 145.

³² George Kennan (1997) 'A Fateful Error', *The New York Times*, 5 February.

with American interests in Russia.³³ In fact, even though many people strongly insisted that Russia could never be a full member of the Alliance, the criteria for NATO membership were not purposely designed to exclude Russia.³⁴ Dennis Ross, the special Middle East coordinator, Strobe Talbott, Special Adviser to the Secretary of State Warren Christopher, and Nicholas Burns, the senior director for Russian affairs, all suggested that Russia must have a place in European security arrangements and any criterion for NATO membership that would automatically exclude Russia should not be put forward.³⁵ Following major debates over the appropriate direction for US foreign policy towards Russia, Washington decided to leave enough room for Russia to reform by encouraging Russia to join NATO on one hand and to provide firm support for NATO expansion on the other. From the perspective of America, if Russia successfully transformed into a democratic partner, the US could then use relations with a democratic Russia to help unify the continent. Yet if Moscow attempted to recreate an imperial security zone in Central and Eastern Europe in a bid to achieve hegemony in Europe, the US could utilise NATO expansion as a protection to those fragile countries against the Russian threat. In other words, if Russia adopted a cooperative attitude and advanced democratic reforms, the expanded NATO would serve as a booster for unifying the continent as a whole; if Russia turned sour, the expanded NATO would provide the security umbrella to protect those Central and Eastern European countries. Thus, to guarantee peace and prosperity both regionally and internationally, the US should promote and support NATO expansion regardless of how Russia would behave in the post-Cold War world.

4.2.2 The 'old' NATO was out of date

The belief that NATO enlargement would serve both European and American interests gave the subjective impetus for NATO expansion. But it was not enough to understand why NATO should expand without considerations from a more objective perspective. Another possible explanation seemed to be more realistic and straightforward: the 'old' NATO was out of date, because simply, the new post-Cold

³³ James Goldgeier (1999) p. 35.

³⁴ Quentin Peel (1993) 'Ruehe Call for Partnership With Moscow', *The Financial Times*, 8 October.

³⁵ Michael Dobbs (1995) 'Wider Alliance Would Increase US Commitments', *The Washington Post*, 5 July and Michael Gordon (1994) 'US Opposes Move to Rapidly Expand NATO Membership', *The New York Times*, 2 January.

War environment required a 'new' NATO. The purpose of NATO, though it has always focused on the fight against the external threat and the promotion of democracy and peace, went through changes after the end of the Cold War. One prominent change was that concentration on shared values outweighed concentration on shared interests, because the subsiding of the Soviet threat highly reduced member states' imminent anxiety about security issues. The London Summit in 1990 stressed for the first time that NATO was becoming more of a political alliance rather than a pure military institution.³⁶ Later in 1991, a 'New Strategic Concept' and the creation of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) were proposed at the Rome Summit. The Concept redefined 'threat' as instabilities arising from economic, social, and political difficulties, not just the aggression of Russia, implying that 'European security was no longer premised on a known threat or geopolitical calculation that presumed a line of potential confrontation.'³⁷ The Concept also reiterated that NATO was purely defensive in purpose so that none of its weapons would ever be used except in self-defence.³⁸ The proposal on the NACC was relatively ambitious, for the Council was designed to include nations from central Europe to central Asia, which implied the desire for a much more extended cooperation. Yet this proposition suffered serious criticism. Scholars like Charles Freeman were not optimistic about the reform, pointing out that the NACC had a wrong membership list. For example, it included Tajikistan that was not even part of Europe but excluded Sweden and Austria.³⁹ Ronald Asmus, Stephen Larrabee and Richard Kugler further argued that the NACC was not effective since it was 'essentially a holding operation that provides meagre psychological reassurance'.⁴⁰

Hence, the NACC was modified. Jenonne Walker, the Senior Director for European Affairs at the National Security Council (NSC) worked with his group to unfold a programme that could bring NACC states closer to NATO as well as to involve other European countries in NATO affairs but that would not extend NATO's security guarantee to new members. This later became known as the Partnership for Peace

³⁶ The London Summit, 1990.

³⁷ Robert Hunter (1999) 'Maximising NATO: A Relevant Alliance Knows How to Reach', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 78, No. 3, p. 197.

³⁸ The Rome Summit, 1991.

³⁹ James Goldgeier (1999) p. 27.

⁴⁰ Ronald Asmus, Richard Kugler, and Stephen Larrabee (1993) 'Building A New NATO', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 4, pp. 28-40.

(PfP), which was officially passed at the principals meeting in October 1993. From then on, the NACC was replaced by a programme that was still inclusive but emphasising on self-selection and rewards for reform: each partner could develop its own relationship bilaterally with NATO. Though depicted as a compromise, the PfP brought many benefits to reduce tensions between those who wanted to enlarge NATO right away and those who did not want to enlarge NATO at all. Ideally, it could build military relationships that involved all European countries, postpone the need to offer new security guarantees, and avoid confrontation with Russia, because the PfP was designed to invite 'all former Warsaw Pact and former Soviet states plus other non-NATO members in Europe to join in military operation with NATO'.⁴¹ The PfP was welcomed by most officials in the Pentagon, such as Aspin, who saw the PfP useful enough because it not only avoided re-dividing Europe but also set up correct incentives for aspirants. In addition to the endorsement of the US, the PfP also received support from Yeltsin who considered the PfP as a substitute rather than a transitional phase toward enlargement. Yeltsin's misunderstanding of the purpose of the PfP was not groundless, as the original intention of the proposition was too broad. Although the PfP was not supposed to replace NATO enlargement, neither was it 'a permanent holding room', it created a stir in those aspirants who were eager to join NATO as soon as possible.⁴²

Central and Eastern Europeans began to realise 'when' was 'never', therefore their voice of doubt arose and the momentum for reform suspended. The accusation from aspirants combined with the problem of inability to pay the costs of the programme of the PfP, placed great pressure on Washington. This 'substitute' eventually failed to prove itself a wise choice. Moreover, the 'New Strategic Concept' led to General Shalikashvili's suggestion of establishing the Combined Joint Task Forces (CJTF), which would allow the Europeans to develop their own capacities to act in cases in which the US declined to send troops. Characterised as 'separable but not separate', the CJTF raised the real possibility of NATO forces acting 'out-of-area'. According to the US Undersecretary of State for political affairs Nicholas Burns, Washington and its European allies 'now find that our entire agenda is pivoting from an inward focus

⁴¹ President Clinton (1994) 'The President's News Conference with Visegrad Leaders in Prague', 12 January.

⁴² Ibid.

on Europe to an outward focus'.⁴³ Most officials in the Pentagon were proponents of the CJTF, especially when they noticed its benefit of heading off any effort by France to turn the Western European Union (WEU), the EU's defence arm, into a competitor to NATO within the framework of European security. However, in addition to military goals that might be achieved through the CJTF, Clinton also wanted to realise diplomatic and political goals at the same time. With respect to this, Asmus, Larrabee and Kugler further clarified that NATO should transform from an alliance focused on collective defence against a specific threat into 'an alliance committed to project democracy, stability and crisis management in a broader strategic sense'.⁴⁴ And this was not something that could be easily realised by relying solely on the CJTF.

All these evaluations showed that the 'old' NATO with the NACC and the so-called 'New Strategic Concept' was out of date. Though these two pillars went through proper reforms into the PfP and the CJTF, they were still not good enough. A more effective way to improve this should be one that could address the potential problems of the Alliance more boldly and decisively. Moderate reforms proved to be unable to achieve the goal, therefore a more ambitious solution centring on the establishment of a 'new' NATO through expansion, became imperative.

4.2.3 Internal US debate over NATO expansion

In addition to the fact that NATO enlargement would meet both European and American interests and that the 'old' NATO had to expand to remain relevant to the post-Cold War world, there were also some pragmatic reasons that made NATO expansion more feasible. For example, Russia was too weak to stop NATO enlargement due to its economic and military collapse; Europe was willing to follow the US lead especially after the Bosnia conflict; but more importantly, the US was so powerful that no one could prevent enlargement from happening once Washington decided to sponsor the programme of NATO expansion. There would not be any strong or effective opposition abroad, but in terms of making the final US decision to

⁴³ Ivo Daalder and James Goldgeier (2006) 'Global NATO', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 85, No. 5, p. 109.

⁴⁴ Ronald Asmus, Richard Kugler, and Stephen Larrabee (1993) pp. 28-40.

support NATO enlargement, the Clinton administration also had to pay attention to the domestic debates which have long been vital to the decision-making process.

To understand the domestic debates over the 'why or whether' question, it is necessary to utilise *bureaucratic politics* as the analytical tool, which provides an angle to see policy-making through a more micro lens. According to *bureaucratic politics*, where individuals stand depends on where they sit, and that how they perceive a situation also depends on their bureaucratic role.⁴⁵ Thereby any particular policy can be understood largely as 'a result of bargaining among players positioned hierarchically in the government'.⁴⁶ In terms of US attitude towards NATO expansion, 'bargaining' mainly took place among individuals from the NSC including President Clinton, the State Department, and the Pentagon. Generally speaking, before 1994, all of them were uncertain about whether NATO should expand. Clinton's foreign policy on Europe in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War concentrated on Russia, giving top priority to assisting Yeltsin with political and economic reform. This resulted in the administration's vague attitude towards US support for NATO enlargement. Yet President Clinton inclined to think positively about absorbing new members into the Alliance after meeting the leaders of Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary—Lech Walesa, Vaclav Havel, and Arpad Goncz respectively at the dedication ceremony of the Holocaust Museum in late April 1993. There were great hopes for the meetings, during which those aspirants conveyed a common message to Clinton that their top preference was to get into NATO as soon as possible. Although it was the 'Holocaust Dedication' that brought the NATO enlargement issue to Clinton's radar screen for the first time, it failed to persuade Clinton to make a clear supportive stance on NATO expansion immediately.⁴⁷

Like President Clinton, many officials in the State Department were also reluctant to see NATO expand immediately after the end of the Cold War, worrying that enlargement would make management of the Alliance more difficult, and would

⁴⁵ Graham T. Allison (1969) 'Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis', *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 63, No. 3, pp. 689-718.

⁴⁶ Graham T. Allison and Morton H. Halperin (Spring, 1972) 'Bureaucratic Politics: A Paradigm and Some Policy Implications', *World Politics*, Vol. 24, p. 43.

⁴⁷ Stanley Sloan (2005) *NATO, the European Union, and the Atlantic Community: the Transatlantic Bargain Challenged*, Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, p. 150.

damage US-Russian relations by undermining Yeltsin's efforts at reform. To be specific, they mainly concerned that NATO enlargement would antagonise Russia, exacerbating its lingering distrust of the West and strengthening anti-Western elements in the Russian political system.⁴⁸ Pentagon officials were even more opposed to NATO expansion. They were pessimistic about the effectiveness of a military alliance with a large number of advanced industrialised democracies, and were particularly hesitant to provide NATO's Article Five security guarantee to new members. There was an atmosphere of anti-enlargement in the government before 1994, though no well-organised domestic opponents ever appeared. What was more astonishing, was that at that time National Security Adviser Anthony Lake seemed to be the only official in favour of near-term expansion of NATO.⁴⁹

With regard to the anti-expansion sentiment in the government, what could be achieved at the principals' meetings in October 1993 was merely an ambiguous decision: putting forward the PfP while saying something vague about NATO's eventual expansion. Ironically, both supporters and opponents of NATO enlargement alike agreed with this decision, though their interpretations of the decision differed greatly. Supporters like Lake, Thomas Donilon, the State Department Chief of Staff, Lynn Davis, the Undersecretary of State regarded the PfP as a stepping stone rather than an 'end' of the enlargement process; while opponents like William Perry, the Deputy Secretary of Defence and Ashton Carter, the Assistant Secretary of Defence thought PfP was good enough and the enlargement question had been left for later.⁵⁰ Those who stood in the middle such as Clinton and Warren Christopher, Secretary of State, saw the decision as an opportunity to keep their choice open-ended. This demonstrated how influential *bureaucratic politics* was on decision-making. Participants' interpretations of the same situation might vary according to their different bureaucratic positions. And the gap between distinct interpretations would widen when 'misperception' occurred, which deluded people into mistaking what they wanted to see as what they saw.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Andrew A. Michta (2009) p. 802.

⁴⁹ George Stephanopoulos (1999) *All Too Human: A Political Education*, Thorndike: Thorndike Press.

⁵⁰ Ashton Carter and William Perry (1999) *Preventive Defence: A New Security Strategy for America*, Washington: Brookings Institution Press.

⁵¹ Robert Jervis (1976) *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*, Princeton: Princeton

Even though the vast majority of leaders in the US government viewed the promotion of the PfP as the most appropriate approach by far, they were unable to convince the other interest groups why the PfP was a better choice than direct expansion. For example, outside experts including Henry Kissinger, Zbigniew Brzezinski and James Baker, the former secretary of state, believed that the idea of NATO expansion had been shelved in favour of the PfP. Hence they accused the Clinton administration of failing to demonstrate leadership, leaving in place a line in Europe drawn by Josef Stalin.⁵² However, their complaints did not shake the administration's sponsorship of the PfP. It was not until January 1994 that the US policy on NATO enlargement became apparent. In January, just before his trip to Brussels, Clinton sent Polish-born General Shalikashvili, Czech-born Albright, the US ambassador to the UN and Hungarian-born Charles Gati, the State Department adviser, to Central Europe to explain the administration's preference for possible NATO enlargement. Later during his visit to Prague, Clinton, for the first time, declared that NATO expansion was no longer a question of whether but when and how.⁵³

Then Lake and Talbott contributed to pushing Clinton's policy forward before the president's Warsaw visit. As the national security adviser, Lake had more direct access to the president instead of having to go through the bureaucracy, so he knew more clearly about Clinton's attitude toward NATO expansion. And after Prague, Lake became more confident about how determined the president was to put NATO enlargement on the agenda. Talbott was a roommate of Clinton at Oxford, and had more chance to know the president's true intention than the other officials. Although he was formerly one of the chief opponents of near-term NATO expansion, Talbott finally changed his mind to support the president's policy on concrete steps toward enlargement the moment he noticed Clinton's true aspiration.⁵⁴ Promoted by Lake and Talbott, Clinton reiterated his pledge that 'NATO will be expanded, that it should be expanded' during his July visit to Warsaw.⁵⁵ The president was so determined that he

University Press.

⁵² Henry Kissinger (1993) 'Not This Partnership', *The Washington Post*, 24 November; Zbigniew Brzezinski (1993) 'A Bigger—and Safer—Europe', *The New York Times*, 1 December; and James Baker (1993) 'Expanding to the East: A New NATO', *The Los Angeles Times*, 5 December.

⁵³ President Clinton (1994) 'The President's News Conference with Visegrad Leaders in Prague', 12 January.

⁵⁴ Daniel Williams (1993) 'Talbott Set for No.2 Job at State', *The Washington Post*, 28 December.

⁵⁵ President Clinton (1994) 'Interview with Tomasz Lis of Polish Television', 1 July.

further emphasised the imperativeness of NATO expansion: the Alliance should be expanded as a way of strengthening security and not conditioned on events in any other country or some new threat arising to NATO. Further, Clinton even told Poland the reason why Washington was working with Warsaw in the PfP was because the US believed that 'when NATO does expand, as it will, a democratic Poland will have placed itself among those ready and able to join'.⁵⁶ So far Clinton's stance was clearly conveyed through various presidential statements. Actually in addition to Lake and Talbott's lobbying, President Clinton had sufficient incentives to support enlargement: his Wilsonian orientation toward spreading democracy; the need to demonstrate US leadership at a time when others questioned that leadership; the appeal by Central and Eastern Europe to erase the line drawn for them in 1945.

Once Clinton had clarified his approval of expansion, the State Department as a whole began to support the president's policy on enlargement. It is worth noticing that the shift in the State Department's attitude occurred mainly due to the influence of Talbott. His promotion to deputy secretary of state led to a change of his stance on NATO expansion, given 'where you stand depends on where you sit'. After he comprehended Clinton's plan to promote enlargement, Talbott, the 'friend of Bill', decided to stay in step with the president without question. He then devoted himself to drumming up support for US policy on expansion within the State Department. At the same time, the Pentagon had undergone complex and painful changes regarding NATO enlargement since early 1994. The Pentagon had been content with its previous stance that the PfP and the CJTF were the right choices till Clinton adopted a supportive position in Prague and Warsaw. The Pentagon soon began to understand why enlargement was imperative: aspirant countries, once reformed well enough to meet the entry criteria, would naturally require full membership of NATO rather than remaining satisfied with the alternative 'substitute'. The endorsement of the PfP should not and could not replace enlargement.

Generally speaking, US policy on NATO expansion was successfully conveyed to Europe and Russia by presidential statements, nonetheless, it has not been accepted internally by all officials in the Clinton administration. In fact, few believed that

⁵⁶ President Clinton (1994) 'Address to the Polish Parliament in Warsaw', 7 July.

enlargement was the administration's policy, hence no one was acting to implement it. The autumn of 1994 witnessed 'a big push' within both the executive and legislative branches. In September 1994, Richard Holbrooke, a close friend of Talbott, was brought back from Bonn to serve as assistant secretary of state for European affairs. He became the enforcer of the decision within the bureaucracy by holding an interagency meeting with his colleagues from the NSC, the State Department, and the Pentagon. Holbrooke told them that President Clinton had already stated his policy and that our job now was to act on it. He won the confrontation with the Pentagon officials because he got the support from the president, vice president, national security adviser and secretary of state, the authority of whom gave him sufficient 'legitimacy'. In December, William Perry, who replaced Aspin called for a meeting to further clarify Clinton's intentions. By reemphasising that Clinton was indeed in favour of NATO expansion, Perry succeeded in persuading the Pentagon to consider providing support for enlargement from then on.

Again, as predicted, the outcome of bureaucratic wrangling would be a compromise. Thereby a so-called two-track approach was produced following those internal meetings. Brzezinski was the first to put forward the two-track approach, which aimed to promote concrete steps on enlargement and to offer an explicit enough place for Russia in the meantime.⁵⁷ It was then elaborated upon in Daniel Fried, Alexander Vershbow and Nicholas Burns' 'road map to enlargement' paper that the two-track approach was better than its alternatives, for it reflected a consensus that expansion and a NATO-Russia track would have to proceed in parallel for the policy to be effective.⁵⁸ On the other hand, although the administration made few efforts to consult with congressional leaders on the issue of enlargement, the Republicans' Congressional campaign left one plank that referred to foreign policy in its Contract with America in September 1994. The Contract detailed the actions the Republicans promised to take if they became the majority in the US House of Representatives, which included three core initiatives: constraints on multilateral peacekeeping efforts, ballistic missile defence, and NATO enlargement. The Contract was seen as a triumph by party leaders, though it also engaged in a frontal assault on the legislation, as it unilaterally and prematurely designated certain European states for NATO, which

⁵⁷ Zbigniew Brzezinski (1994) 'Normandy Evasion', *The Washington Post*, 3 May.

⁵⁸ James Goldgeier (1999) pp. 162-163.

would risk discouraging reformers in countries not named and fostering complacency in countries that were.⁵⁹ The Clinton administration neglected this potential problem, and inclined to take necessary consideration for bridge building with legislators. Yet enlargement supporters in the Congress did not give up their idea of promoting NATO expansion. One month later, with the joint efforts of the House and the Senate, Congressman Henry Hyde, Benjamin Gilman, Senator Hank Brown and Paul Simon advanced the NATO Participation Act to be passed as Title II of the International Narcotics Control Correction Act of 1994, which provided names, a timetable, and criteria for enlargement.⁶⁰ So far, adequate preparations for NATO expansion had been made. Finally the momentous time came—the NSC, the State Department and the Pentagon all came up with a clear unified position at the NATO Foreign Ministers Meeting in Brussels in December 1994 that the US would support NATO enlargement. Since the question of ‘why’ was already resolved within the US, the next step for the administration would be to eliminate external obstacles, especially to reduce Russian objection.

4.3 How to manage the NATO-Russian relationship?

In addition to clarifying US determination to promote NATO expansion, there was another important task to be addressed at the NATO Foreign Ministers meeting in Brussels: to see Russia sign the PfP programme documents as well as to establish a special dialogue between NATO and Russia. However, Andrei Kozyrev, the Russian Foreign Minister who regarded the prevention of NATO expansion as the greatest achievement of Russian foreign policy in 1993, refused to cooperate.⁶¹ Later at the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe summit in Budapest, Yeltsin expressed his anger over NATO expansion and warned Europe that it ‘is risking encumbering itself with a cold peace’.⁶² Both Christopher and Clinton were shocked by Russia’s unexpected response, for they thought information symmetry between America and Russia had been carefully protected. Once again, the costs of

⁵⁹ Warren Christopher and William Perry (1995) ‘Foreign Policy, Hamstrung’, *The New York Times*, 13 February.

⁶⁰ ‘NATO Participation Act of 1994’, *International Narcotics Control Corrections Act of 1994*, 25 January 1994.

⁶¹ Martin Walker (1994) ‘Clinton’s Secret Successes’, *The Washington Post*, 4 September.

⁶² James Goldgeier (1999) p. 88.

'misinterpretation' became a hard nut for America to crack. Looking back to August 1993, Yeltsin had promised that Russia would not object to Polish membership within NATO, but in January 1994, he required NATO to accept candidates, including Russia, in just one package. After hearing Clinton's Warsaw declaration, Yeltsin flew to Washington in September for an in-depth discussion. Clinton told him face to face that NATO was potentially open to all European democracies, including Russia, and would not expand in a way that threatened Russian interests. Clinton even promised that names would not be announced until after Yeltsin's 1996 presidential election.⁶³ However, Russia was not content with that; it launched an assault on Chechnya and facilitated its plans to complete a nuclear reactor deal with Iran. In short, throughout the year of 1995, the US was busy amending relations with Russia rather than moving forward to answer the remaining questions of 'how', 'when' and 'who'?

In order to avoid serious confrontation with Russia, on one hand, Talbott intensively consulted with Russian deputy foreign minister Georgi Mamedov over a possible NATO-Russia agreement. On the other hand, Clinton accepted Yeltsin's invitation to travel to Moscow for the fiftieth anniversary celebration of VE day in May 1995, when the president was facing an enormous dilemma of whether to strongly insist on expansion due to the accusation that the US was too weak to hold the Central European hostage to Moscow's interests or to be soft on Russia in order to encourage its peaceful reform. As a result, during his visit in Moscow, Clinton affirmed that NATO enlargement which was not anti-Russian was moving forward but also reiterated his promise that a timetable would not be announced until after Yeltsin's re-election. The year of 1995 saw the president playing a difficult balancing game, yet it also witnessed the first glimmer of the dawn: Clinton did convince Yeltsin that Russia should join the PfP.⁶⁴ In order to give an impetus to a benign NATO-Russian relationship, the NATO enlargement study was established, suggesting prospective members be judged on a case-by-case basis. With regard to this, Russia no longer needed to worry about its right to apply for membership, though it remained ambiguous whether Russia might someday become a member of NATO. Another thorny problem faced by NATO and Russia was the Bosnia resolution (the Dayton

⁶³ Ibid., p. 77.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 93.

Accords).⁶⁵ Although he strongly expressed his disapproval of US actions in Bosnia in September 1995, Yeltsin finally agreed in principle to Russian participation in the Bosnia implementation force. Moscow emphasised that Russians would serve 'with, but not under' NATO, signalling its optimism about being under American command in Bosnia yet making NATO 'still a four-letter word in Moscow'.⁶⁶ Therefore, despite the fact that cooperation between NATO and Russia was successful in Bosnia, it could not assure the US that the future NATO-Russian relationship would be promising.

The Clinton administration had always kept in mind that only by solving the 'hazard'—the biggest concern about the NATO-Russian relationship—could NATO expansion go smoothly in the future. The first formal call for a special dialogue between NATO and Russia was proposed at the NATO Foreign Ministers meetings in Brussels in 1994. This turned out to be abortive in the end. Even though Washington failed in its attempt to improve the NATO-Russian relationship immediately, it at least figured out that the US-preferred bottom line was that neither would Russia gain a veto over the NATO decision-making process, nor would America engage with Russia on the issue of nuclear weapons and the stationing of NATO troops. On the other hand, Moscow's major concerns were put forward by Mamedov through his arguments about two conditions for NATO-Russian cooperation: 'no nuclear weapons deployed on the territory of the new members and no stationing of NATO troops on new members' territory'.⁶⁷ According to Mamedov, unless both of these two requirements were met, Russia would not accept NATO expansion.

With respect to this, the US delivered two unilateral statements aiming to address how Washington would meet these two conditions respectively. The first statement referred to Christopher's speech in Brussels in December 1996, in which he articulated 'three nos' to ease Russian concerns: NATO had no intention, no plan, and no need to station nuclear weapons on the territory of any new members.⁶⁸ With this

⁶⁵ 'Study on NATO Enlargement', September 1995. Michael Dobbs (1995) 'Ex-Soviet Bloc Nations to Get NATO Umbrella', *The Washington Post*, 29 September.

⁶⁶ Ashton Carter and William Perry (1999) pp. 43-44. Richard Holbrooke (1998) *To End a War*, New York: Random House, p. 214.

⁶⁷ James Goldgeier (1999) p. 90.

⁶⁸ Warren Christopher (1996) 'Fulfilling the Founding Vision of NATO', *US Department of State*

statement in hand, Russian foreign minister Yevgeny Primakov agreed to start working with the NATO foreign ministers on a possible NATO-Russia charter. The second US statement was also released in Brussels, in which Alexander Vershbow clarified that the additional permanent stationing of substantial combat forces was not a choice for NATO.⁶⁹ This, however, did not meet Russian requirements directly, as what Russia actually wanted was a binding commitment that no foreign troops would be stationed on the territory of the new members. Yet Moscow also understood it might be the best Washington could do, as US domestic complaints had already revealed that 'NATO should not be turned into an instrument to conciliate Russia or Russia will undermine it'.⁷⁰ In order to ease Moscow's pain, Clinton offered Yeltsin more promises including the decision to move forward on START III immediately after START II was ratified, and an understanding to advance Russian membership in other key Western clubs like the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and the G7/8. Finally, in May 1997, the NATO-Russia charter, 'Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between the Russian Federation and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation', was passed in Paris.⁷¹ This charter became another landmark after the Dayton Accords, which not only properly defined the relationship between NATO and Russia, but also significantly weakened the opponents' argument that Russia would never accept enlargement.

4.4 When should NATO expand?

With the easing of US-Russian tensions and the improvement of the NATO-Russian relationship, the third question of NATO enlargement—When should NATO expand?—was put on the agenda. To address this question, it was necessary to firstly

Dispatch, Vol. 7, No. 50, 9 December, p. 601.

⁶⁹ Craig Whitney (1997) 'NATO Says It Won't Base New Forces in the East', *The New York Times*, 15 March.

⁷⁰ William Drozdiak (1997) 'Poland Urges NATO Not to Appease Russia: The Smell of Yalta is Always with Us', *The Washington Post*, 17 March.

⁷¹ On the issue of how to minimise Russian opposition, Germany played a central role. The Founding Act was very much a product of US-German cooperation. See Adrian Hyde-Price (2000) pp. 152-153. Germany and the US provided the 'greatest stimuli for negotiations and for the agreement's wording', and the Acts 'decisive passages were formulated in Washington's State Department and in the Foreign Office in Bonn in collaboration with NATO head quarters in Brussels'. See Karl-Heinz Kamp (1997) 'NATO-Russland-Gundakte: Trojanisches Pferd oder Meilenstein des Ausgleichs?' *Aussenpolitik*, Vol. 48, No. 4, p. 317, quoted in Adrian Hyde-Price (2000) p. 153.

specify whether the first round of enlargement was the only and last one. If so, it would be meaningless to discuss the question of 'when', given 'when' would become 'never' for the other Central and Eastern European aspirants who could not gain the memberships in the first round. In March 1996, Christopher delivered a speech in Prague, in which he responded that the first wave of NATO enlargement would not be the last.⁷² Moreover, he also stressed the administration's commitment to push NATO expansion forward and hinted that the question of 'when' was going to be answered very shortly. The force that drove the question of 'when' needing to be answered straight away came from Robert Dole, the Republican presidential challenger. Dole criticised the president for 'foot-dragging' on expanding NATO, accusing Clinton of not naming names or setting a timetable for enlargement.⁷³ Unlike the president, Dole neither hesitated to offer a list of candidates nor was unwilling to declare a date. He even announced his preference for setting the year of 1998, the 60th anniversary of the appeasement at Munich, as the date to bring in new members. This, without doubt, placed great pressure on the administration. On the other hand, Clinton had always been reluctant to name names or to set a timetable, for fear of reducing the ability to cooperate with the other emerging democracies and making the management of the NATO-Russia relationship more difficult. However, when encountered with the challenge from Dole, Clinton intended to issue a more concrete plan of NATO expansion as soon as possible. Additionally, the anxiety of the Central and Eastern European aspirants and of those internal ethnic communities made Clinton more determined to proceed with all the details of enlargement. The administration soon realised that the strategic and political benefits of enlargement outweighed the concerns about Russia. Hence later in October when Clinton gave his campaign speech in Detroit, the president stated clearly that 'by 1999, NATO's 50th anniversary and ten years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the first group of countries we invite to join should be fully-fledged members of NATO'.⁷⁴ Until then, the question of 'when' was finally settled, but Clinton did not go further and identify which countries he wanted to see admitted to the Alliance.

⁷² Warren Christopher (1998) *In the Stream of History: Shaping Foreign Policy for a New Era*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.

⁷³ Robert Dole (1996) 'Remarks in Frankenmuth, Michigan', 22 October.

⁷⁴ President Clinton (1996) 'Remarks to the Community in Detroit', 22 October.

Even though many actors contributed to address the question of 'when', it is worth noticing that presidential dominance played a crucial role. Recalling Clinton's promise to Yeltsin that concrete steps would not be implemented until he was safely re-elected, it was apparent that Clinton was so unwilling to see NATO expansion provoke Russia. Thus Talbott advised Clinton not to set a date, but rather simply to say something vague that new members would be taken in sometime during the second term. However, there remained supporters like Lake who argued in favour of concrete plans right away. The distinct views of these two key representatives stemmed from their different assumptions of Moscow's role in Europe. Talbott believed that Russia should be part of the European security framework, while Lake agreed more with Kissinger that Russia would remain as an outsider due to the long-term mistrust between the two sides. Again, bureaucratic wrangling led to a compromise: Talbott, who was inspired by Brzezinski's 'two-track' approach, decided to commit himself to put together the two tracks of the policy in 1995. The 'two-track' policy was expected to end the debate, as it would satisfy both proponents and opponents of near-term expansion.

However, it was soon questioned due to its ignorance of the changes in Clinton's attitude toward a more concrete plan. Presidential dominance soon prevailed over bureaucratic wrangling, shifting US policy to immediate implementation of NATO enlargement. Though President Clinton used to see the peaceful reform in Russia as his top national security objective, he also wished to support Walesa and Havel and to maintain his credibility in ethnic communities. In other words, Clinton had to deal with a trade-off between wanting to support reform in Central and Eastern Europe as well as reform in Russia, which was referred to as 'value complexity'.⁷⁵ It seemed almost impossible to pursue one objective when that would adversely affect the pursuit of another vital objective. For Clinton, the only way to solve the problem of the so-called 'value complexity' was to figure out which one of these issues would be a priority over the other, on the basis of a careful assessment about Washington's military, diplomatic, and political demands. Bearing this in mind, the president soon found 'value complexity' was not a big issue when he discovered the great possibility of solving the problem of Russia. He believed that the Russian track would not be

⁷⁵ James Goldgeier (1999) pp. 159-160.

undermined and future cooperation between Russia and the Alliance would be promising, given that Russia was willing to make contributions to the Bosnia operation regardless of how underdeveloped the NATO-Russian relationship was at that time. Therefore, he became confident of his ability to convince Yeltsin of the idea that NATO expansion was not anti-Russian and that future Russian membership in NATO was possible. In his Detroit speech, Clinton reemphasised that 'NATO enlargement is not directed against anyone. It will advance the security of everyone: NATO's old members, new members and non-members alike'.⁷⁶ In short, it was Clinton who pushed NATO expansion a large step forward, implying that presidential determination might play a more important role than bureaucratic rivalries.

4.5 Who should gain the membership of NATO (in the first round)?

The question of 'who' was the last one to be addressed in the Clinton administration. It turned out to be the only one being discussed thoroughly through a formal decision-making process. The main focus of the debate was on which countries were qualified enough to be invited to join the Alliance as the first wave of NATO expansion. To be specific, there was not great controversy surrounding the memberships of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic, yet debates remained over the memberships of Slovenia and Romania.

In response, Ronald Asmus, the deputy assistant secretary of state for European affairs, raised a famous approach of 'Small is Beautiful plus Robust Open Door'.⁷⁷ He, accompanied by Vershbow and Fried, tried to persuade Clinton to merely agree to the membership of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic. According to them, a small membership would make it easy for the administration to obtain support from the Senate, to put off the Baltic question, and to ensure enlargement can continue to the next round.⁷⁸ However, challenges came from both inside and outside of America.

⁷⁶ President Clinton (1996) 'Remarks to the Community in Detroit', 22 October.

⁷⁷ Ronald Asmus (2002) *Opening NATO's Door: How The Alliance Remade Itself For A New Era*, New York: Columbia University Press.

⁷⁸ Opponents of Baltic membership in NATO argued that 'any NATO movement into the Baltic region is likely to aggravate anti-Western attitudes in Moscow and create an irreconcilably suspicious and hostile atmosphere between Russia and the West—one that could result in a Russian return to Cold War postures and policies'. See Kent Meyer (2001) 'US Support for Baltic Membership in NATO',

The Pentagon used to have high expectations about Slovenia, yet it abandoned the thought after examining the existing infrastructure in Slovenia. It was apparent that neither Slovenia nor Romania could meet the criteria for NATO membership due to their lack of developed economies and benign strategic environments. Thus the Pentagon reached an agreement on limiting the first round of NATO expansion to three countries only. The Senate, on the other hand, rejected the proposal of a small membership until it was informed by Gore, Albright and Deputy National Security Adviser Samuel Berger altogether that the president believed three was better.⁷⁹

Contrary to internal challenges, external challenges were more durable. US allies like France and Italy were in favour of more states being admitted than America wanted. They even accused the US of its dominance in NATO. But this time, the US did not need to be soft on Europe. The US has always played a dominant role in the Alliance, shouldering the responsibility to provide necessary security guarantee for European members. Yet after the end of the Cold War, Europe began to pursue an independent role. Bosnia saw the Europeans' first attempt to deal with relevant issues by themselves, the failure of which again confirmed the importance of a US security umbrella to Europe. As a result, in terms of NATO membership, it was unnecessary for the US to dedicate itself to persuade its allies, because European members would follow the US decision anyway. With the establishment of the Senate NATO Observer Group and the NATO enlargement ratification office which were created by Senator Trent Lott and Jeremy Rosner respectively, the question of 'who' was addressed satisfactorily—the issuance of invitation to Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic was made at Madrid in July 1997.

So far, all relevant questions on NATO expansion including 'why', 'how', 'when', and 'who' had been addressed one by one. Next, as long as the Senate voted in favour of enlargement, NATO expansion would be truly realised. Actually what concerned the Senate most were the problems of Russian objection and the costs of expansion. Since the former was properly handled through the NATO-Russian charter, more attention was paid to the latter. Surprisingly, a consensus on the budget was easily

Parameters, Winter, p. 72.

⁷⁹ Madeleine Albright (2003) *Madam Secretary: A Memoir*, London: Macmillan.

achieved despite different estimations having been made by the Pentagon, the NATO enlargement study, and NATO itself. The 'fast-track approach' to address the question of costs would not have been striking, yet it attracted attention due to the fact that it gave a valuable insight into how the lack of formality led to the failure to cover all aspects early in the decision-making process. Specifically, the estimation of costs should have been done in the early stage, taking into account that people would like to know the costs of a project before rather than after embarking on it. There were a number of reasons why no effort was made to have a cost estimate done until near the end of the process. For example, Lake focused more on the crises in Bosnia, Haiti and Somalia; and Perry saw the issues of denuclearisation more urgent. Bureaucrats' preferences varied according to their positions, which might lead to the problem of informality, but they would all contribute to promote a particular policy once that policy became prominent.

Finally the exciting time to open the gift box came. Following Lake, who inspired the administration as a whole; Holbrooke, who woke up the bureaucracy and led the implementation; and Talbott, who kept the two tracks going harmoniously, Rosner took the last stick to win Senate consent. In the administration's NATO enlargement ratification office, Rosner continued to make efforts till a resolution was reported out of the Foreign Relations Committee in March 1998. The awarding time came one month later when the Senate voted in favour of that resolution, which marked the official launching of NATO expansion.

To sum up, in order to analyse the impetus behind the Clinton administration's recommitment to NATO, it has been necessary to focus on the influence of bureaucratic politics, the consultation between the executive and legislative branches, and the attitude of the public. From the perspective of bureaucratic politics, interactions among the NSC, the State Department and the Pentagon, especially among key figures including Clinton, Lake, Albright, Talbott, Holbrooke, and Rosner were considered as the driving force for NATO expansion. But it is also worth noting that without the Capitol Hill's efforts, US policy on enlargement would not have become reality. In 1995, Republicans took over both the Senate and the House, creating a divided government. Besides, the Clinton administration failed to

adequately consult with the Congress until 1996. But Clinton did not have to face serious internal disputes on the issue of expansion because the majority of Republicans were actually in favour of NATO enlargement. The reason why they voted yes on the president's policy lay in their belief that they were fulfilling Ronald Reagan's legacy rather than handing Clinton a victory.⁸⁰ Thus interestingly, Republicans saw themselves rather than Clinton as the engine driving NATO enlargement. The third important angle on analysis about US commitment to NATO expansion referred to public opinion. Demonstrated by polls, the public also favoured NATO expansion, believing that new members would become 'contributors' rather than 'consumers' in order to share burdens and responsibilities. A poll taken in January 1997 showed that 45% favoured enlargement while 40% opposed it. The margin soon became even higher: 54% to 37%.⁸¹ Moreover, interest groups within the public also played important roles in boosting enlargement: ethnic communities like the Polish Americans, and outside experts such as Kissinger, Brzezinski put great pressure on the Clinton administration following the initial stage of the policy.

While enjoying the victory, the Clinton administration also needed to reflect on previous mistakes and beware of potential challenges. As mentioned above, the issue of informality, such as the delayed evaluation of costs and the administration's inadequate consultation with the Congress, was a serious error that needed to be avoided in the future. Although the first wave of enlargement had demonstrated that NATO was transformed into a diplomatic and political alliance rather than remaining as a pure defensive military institution, and that the US still possessed the leadership in the Alliance, and that the Russia track was not undermined by expansion, the prospect of NATO remained unclear. According to Robert Hunter, the challenges to NATO mainly centred on 'whether allies are able and willing to defend new members under challenge, whether they will underpin the domestic political and economic development of new entrants, and whether a much larger alliance can continue to take decisions and act on them'.⁸² Further, would there be a second round of enlargement, taking into account that countries in the 'grey zone' were eager to join NATO? Would

⁸⁰ The Contract with America in part used text from former President Ronald Reagan's 1985 State of the Union Address.

⁸¹ James Goldgeier (1999) p. 139.

⁸² Robert Hunter (1999) pp. 197-198.

Russia stay peacefully under the framework, given that Russia did not have a real voice in NATO affairs? Moreover, the Baltic issue, the potential financial costs, and the suspected effectiveness of the new NATO would also become challenges on the road to expansion.⁸³ Thus, in addition to having every confidence in a promising future of NATO expansion, the US should always get prepared for potential twists and turns at the same time.

⁸³ Russia's policy towards the Baltics since 1991 has been cooperative in some respects and confrontational in others. 'The domineering nature of Russian policy has been largely responsible for the vigorous efforts that Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia have made to seek NATO membership.' See Mark Kramer (2002) 'NATO, the Baltic States and Russia: A Framework for Sustainable Enlargement', *International Affairs*, Vol. 78, No. 4, p. 733.

Chapter 5: NATO's Engagement in Kosovo

5.1 Introduction

Since the end of the Cold War, NATO has navigated several existential crises, over Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Libya. Each of these NATO involvements, either active or passive, have witnessed and pushed the transformation of NATO. In the aftermath of the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, suspicions on the persistence of NATO were growing, entailing that the relevance of NATO was little to the new security environment without the common threat of Soviet Union to the Alliance. As Ellen Hallams noted, an institution can persist only if it proves able to adapt its rules and procedures to meet changing circumstances and the emergence of new threats and challenges to the security of its members, and there was no exception for NATO.¹ Guided by the US, NATO underwent a process of adaption immediately when being questioned about its constituency. The 1990 London Declaration and, to a greater extent, the 1991 'New Strategic Concept' released at the Rome Summit acknowledged that the risks to allied security in this 'new strategic environment' would be harder to predict and access. New threats were suggested to come from 'the adverse consequences of instabilities that may arise from the serious economic, social, and political difficulties, including ethnic rivalries and terrorist disputes, which are faced by many countries in Central and Eastern Europe'.² Thus how NATO would adapt itself to the new task of crisis management and conflict prevention became critical for its maintenance as a viable and important organisation in the post-Cold War era. As Senator Richard Lugar predicted, NATO would go 'out of area or out of business'. Hence in respect of these challenges, NATO found Bosnia to be a likely answer to the question of its relevance.

In 1992, NATO issued statements to offer support to both the UN and the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) respectively, which

¹ Ellen Hallams (2010) *The United States and NATO since 9/11: the Transatlantic Alliance Renewed*, London: Routledge.

² The Rome Summit, 1991.

signalled its 'formal entry into peace-support operation'.³ However, its subsequent engagement in Bosnia only reflected hidden hesitation in dealing with those 'new threats' when they did arise. Throughout, NATO proved ill-equipped to operate this type and its force structure reforms could not keep pace with the requirements of the new tasks of conflict management.⁴ In addition, it was hard to reach agreements among allies, either on what interests were at stake in the former Yugoslavia or how to go about achieving them.⁵ Actually, regarding the fact that NATO's involvement in Bosnia was determined by an agenda laid down not in Brussels but in New York, the political leadership and military capabilities of the US became the real prerequisite to ensure that NATO would be truly effective. Hence as the situation in Bosnia continued to deteriorate, there re-emerged a realist criticism: 'NATO was little more than a "hollow shell"'.⁶ As a result, NATO's reluctant and shattering response to the break-up of the former Yugoslavia and the resulting war in Bosnia led to the eventual criticism about its role in Yugoslavia's collapse—'had it acted sooner and more decisively, NATO might well have forced an early settlement and thus prevented much of the carnage and colossal human suffering that was visited upon Bosnia'.⁷

Although Bosnia demonstrated that NATO's transformation from a traditional alliance preoccupied by self-defence to one oriented towards collective security was not an easy task, it did witness NATO's evolvement 'to the heart of an emerging European security architecture'.⁸ Bosnia saw NATO's first out-of-area operation, the first experience of peacekeeping, the first major deployment of NATO-led land forces beyond member-state territory, and the first major instance of NATO's coordinated involvement with partner countries including Russia.⁹ Furthermore, those challenges of creating peace and security highlighted in Bosnia finally turned out to be a driving force for NATO expansion. With the crisis of Bosnia being resolved, many Central and Eastern European countries began pursuing full-scale membership of NATO as

³ James Sperling and Mark Webber (2009) 'NATO: from Kosovo to Kabul', *International Affairs*, Vol. 85, No. 3, pp. 491-511.

⁴ John Deni (2007) *Alliance Management and Maintenance: Restructuring NATO for the 21st Century*, Aldershot: Ashgate.

⁵ James Sperling and Mark Webber (2009) pp. 491-511.

⁶ Sean Kay (1998) *NATO and the Future of European Security*, Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.

⁷ Derek Chollet (2005) *The Road to the Dayton Accords: A Study of American Statecraft*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p. x.

⁸ Sean Kay (1998).

⁹ John Deni (2007).

the only means of ensuring their long-term security. As Hallams concluded, it was NATO's mission in Bosnia that helped push the issue of enlargement firmly onto NATO's transformation agenda. Thus, after the formal invitation of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic to join the Alliance at the Madrid Summit, the end of the 1990s saw NATO moving towards 'an alliance of values, united in extending security to those states in Europe that embrace the political and economic norms that bind NATO's current members'.¹⁰ This 'new' alliance, which had its membership expanded and its tasks broadened 'out-of area', then faced its first formal test in the post-Cold War period: the Kosovo operation. According to Javier Solana, Kosovo was important to the history of NATO, given the fact that 'For the first time, a defensive alliance launched a military campaign to avoid a humanitarian tragedy outside its own borders. For the first time, an alliance of sovereign nations fought not to conquer or preserve territory but to protect the values on which the alliance was found'.¹¹

The timing of the outbreak of the Kosovo war partially contributed to the success of the operation, as the war occurred when the international community especially the US had learned a lot from Bosnia that a quick response was necessary, and when NATO had transformed further to be capable of assuming more responsibilities 'out-of-area', and when the Clinton administration had officially acknowledged the importance of the transatlantic alliance and reconfirmed its commitment to NATO. This chapter is mainly a case study on the Kosovo operation, focusing on how US decisions were made in the case of Kosovo. It firstly introduces the historical background of the war, then outlines how the US policy changed from non-involvement to military intervention. Kosovo was basically a NATO operation, thus the chapter moves to evaluate whether it was a successful NATO operation and analyses the legacy of the Kosovo mission including the implications of the Kosovo war to NATO.

¹⁰ Ivo H. Daalder (1999) *NATO in the 21st Century: What Purpose, What Missions?*, Brookings Website, p. 12.

¹¹ Javier Solana (1999) 'NATO's Success in Kosovo', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 76, No. 6, p. 114.

5.2 From 'Ancient Hatred' to Dayton Peace

As the crisis in Bosnia subsided, it was widely expected that Kosovo would be the 'next test' for the Alliance which had gone through certain transformation alongside the expansion process. 'Ancient hatreds', the long-standing historical grievances in the region, which stemmed from contested views over territorial claims to Kosovo, were regarded as the main causes of the conflict. Kosovo, a province of less than 11,000 square kilometres, had a population of two million, 90% of whom were Albanian. But both the Albanian and the Serbian national communities claimed it for their own. The primary relevance emphasised by the Serbs referred to the belief that Kosovo was Serbia's historical and spiritual heartland. On the other hand, the Albanians insisted that long before the Serb tribes arrived in Kosovo, their ancestors had already inhabited there since the sixth century AD. As a result, based on their own rationales, both the Albanians and the Serbs had a deep-rooted commitment to claim Kosovo for their own through generation after generation.

WWII witnessed the increasing anger of Kosovars when they found their homeland, though tiny in territorial area, was divided among the Germans, Italians, and Bulgarians. Tito's communist agents had promised to support the unification of all Albanians: 'after the war a unified Albania-Kosovo would become a part of Yugoslavia, or even a general larger Balkan federation', however, as it turned out, the post-1945 Yugoslav state made not only the Serbs but also the Albanians disappointed.¹² Serbia became one of the six federal republics, with numerous Serbs absorbed into neighbouring Yugoslav republics. Although the new state structure was initially devised to promote equality among the federal units, the Serbs believed the purpose to be keeping Serbia weak. On the other hand, Kosovo, though awarded the status of 'autonomous region' due to its considerable Albanian population, became a part of Serbia rather than integrated into Albania as it wished. To make matters worse, the Yugoslav constitution, promulgated in 1946, categorised Albanians as a 'nationality' rather than a 'nation', implying that the Albanians could never establish a republic of their own. Therefore, no matter how much effort they made, both the

¹² Carole Rogel (2004) *The Breakup of Yugoslavia and Its Aftermath*, Westport: Greenwood Press, p. 73.

Serbs and the Albanians did not get what they pursued when the time came at the end of WWII.

In 1948 Yugoslavia was isolated after splitting with Russia. The Kosovars immediately cut off their ties with Albania, the government members of which came from the Communist-led National Liberation Movement (LNC), an Albanian resistance organisation created in September 1942.¹³ However, the Kosovo Albanians still had no chance to get rid of ideological influences from either Russia or China, resulting in their hopelessness to achieve autonomy during the Cold War. Not until the 1960s did the situation move towards a better direction for them. In 1963, the Yugoslav government upgraded Kosovo to the status of 'province'; in 1965, Kosovo was allotted financial assistance, which accounted for 40% of the so-called special federal fund that was established for economic improvement in underdeveloped regions; in 1967, Tito made a notable visit to the province; in 1968, 'Metohija', a large basin covering the southwestern part of Kosovo, was dropped from the province's name; and in 1969, Kosovo drew up a new constitution and established a new supreme court.¹⁴ To push it one step forward, the Constitution of 1974 finally enabled Kosovo to have an equal vote in national governmental bodies, identifying Kosovo as one of eight units of the Yugoslav federation. On the other hand, either encouraged or stimulated by the victory of the Albanians, the Serbs began to urge Serbian unification. With the upsurge of the 'Serbian nationalism', Kosovo was soon regarded as the most appropriate place to start the Serbs' plan because Kosovo was essentially 'Serbia's historical and spiritual heartland'.¹⁵

In fact, the ethnic tensions did not increase dramatically until Slobodan Milosevic, who stripped Kosovo of its autonomy, became President of Serbia in 1987. In the following years, to keep the nationalist course on track, Milosevic abandoned the party ideology and focused on purging the League of Communist (LCY) parties in Kosovo, Vojvodina, and Montenegro. He sought to retain 'the remnant of the previous confederation by tightening this political and military control over Kosovo

¹³ Walter Roberts (1987) *Tito, Mihailović, and the Allies, 1941-1945*, Durham: Duke University Press, p. 165.

¹⁴ Carole Rogel (2003) 'Kosovo: Where It All Began', *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, Vol. 17, No.1, pp. 167-182.

¹⁵ Laura Silber and Allan Little (1997) *Yugoslavia: Death of a Nation*, New York: Penguin Books.

and Montenegro'.¹⁶ Specifically, in the case of Kosovo, what Milosevic had to overcome first in order to achieve his objective was an obstacle created by the Constitution of 1973 that had given Kosovo autonomy. With regard to this, on March 23, 1989, the autonomous status of Kosovo was abolished by a 'packed' parliament. Shortly thereafter, the Serbs proclaimed Serbia to be whole again. Thus the year of 1989 witnessed an unprecedented victory for Serbia, which gained control over four of the eight units of the Yugoslav federation in the end. Owning half of the votes, Serbia became the real dominator of Yugoslav politics.¹⁷

In response, the Kosovars carried out protests, but only ended in meeting with Belgrade's severe police and military restrictions. The harsh arrest and unfair trial of those Albanian communist party leaders eventually heightened tensions between the Albanians and the Serbs, and raised concerns in other Yugoslav republics as well. In the face of the Serb pressure, the Albanian political leaders nevertheless issued a declaration of sovereignty for Kosovo shortly after Kosovo lost its autonomy in March 1989. At the end of that year, the Albanian leaders successfully organised the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) as their legitimate political party, which absorbed 700,000 members by 1991. Ibrahim Rugova, the leader of the LDK, set the political programme for the Kosovars based on his faith in pacifism. Judging that Kosovo was poor, its people had no weapons, and the Serbs were eager to find a pretext to march into Kosovo, Rugova preferred a policy of 'being calm and wait'. In short, although Rugova agreed to set the ultimate goal as 'a republic for Kosovo', he repeatedly advocated pacifism vis-a-vis the Serbs to be the basic principle.¹⁸ The next step before the Kosovars announcing their victory was to hold a referendum on the establishment of their own republic, which received overwhelming support from voters on September 22, 1991. However, none of these changes was acknowledged by the Serbs.

¹⁶ James Petras (1999) 'NATO: Saving Kosovo by Destroying It', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 5 June, p. 1414.

¹⁷ Branka Magas (1993) *The Destruction of Yugoslavia: Tracking the Break-up 1980-92*, London: Verso; Gale Stokes (1993) *The Walls Came Tumbling Down: The Collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe*, Oxford: Oxford University Press; Carole Rogel (1998) *The Breakup of Yugoslavia and the War in Bosnia*, Westport: Greenwood Press; Christopher Bennett (1995) *Yugoslavia's Bloody Collapse: Causes, Course and Consequences*, New York: New York University Press; and Lenard Cohen (1997) 'Prelates and Politicians in Bosnia: The Role of Religion in Nationalist Mobilization', *The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity*, Vol. 25, No. 3, pp. 481-499.

¹⁸ Carole Rogel (2003) pp. 167-182.

With support from Serbia, which had officially sent a message of Serbian unification after abolishing the autonomy of Kosovo, both the Croatian and Slovenia Serbs issued declarations of independence and held republic elections to bring non-communist governments to power in 1991. All these signals were suggesting that the disintegration of Yugoslavia was imminent and that warfare was unavoidable, but Kosovo remained relatively calm in 1991 and even in the following four years when Bosnia was put under the spotlight. Ironically, disturbances that had locked the Albanians and Serbs on a collision course in Kosovo since Tito's death in 1980, did not escalate rapidly, instead, both the Albanians and the Serbs lived their lives peacefully during the Bosnia crisis. By defining 'autonomy' as 'run by ourselves and cut off any link with the Serbs' disregarding how poor they were, the Kosovo Albanians, with financial assistance from other Albanian communities abroad, therefore concentrated on running their own schools and hospitals at home. On the other hand, the Serbs were busy with 'a three-and-a-half-year-long siege against Sarajevo' and trusted in their police's ability to patrol Kosovo. Hence they had no time or energy to deal with the sometimes unruly province. As a result, both of these two groups refused to see Bosnia as a possible chilling outbreak of their hostility, making military means unpopular at that moment. But this temporary peace in Kosovo was soon broken after the ceasefire in Bosnia. And the situation became even worse when the Kosovo Albanians, unhappy with the Dayton Peace Accords, opted for a military policy toward the Serbs.

5.3 From 'Pacifism' to a military approach

Although the warning signs had emanated from Kosovo since the 1980s, Western leaders failed to respond to them as quickly as possible, instead, they continued to view Kosovo as 'only a footnote'. The reason why the West refused to take Kosovo seriously lay in some fundamental misperceptions. On one hand, unlike Bosnia and Croatia, Kosovo was widely accepted by the West as being part of Serbia, 'without any of the sovereign rights the other republics that had seceded from Yugoslavia enjoyed'.¹⁹ On the other hand, the strategy adopted by the Albanian leader Ibrahim Rugova was 'passive resistance', which assumed that war would not be necessary if

¹⁹ Ellen Hallams (2010) p. 36.

the Albanians could build democratic institutions within Kosovo. Therefore, lacking a keen sense of smell, Kosovo had missed the only two chances that could help attract the West's attention before the conflict escalated unexpectedly. The first chance came in December 1992 when President George H.W. Bush sent out a 'Christmas Warning' drafted by his Secretary of State, Lawrence Eagleburger. The message sent to Milosevic was that 'In the event of conflict in Kosovo caused by Serbian action, the United States will be prepared to employ military force against Serbians in Kosovo and in Serbia proper'.²⁰ Kosovars should have seized this opportunity to raise the issue of Kosovo, which might have been put on the international community's agenda earlier, thereby preventing the outbreak of the war. The second chance referred to the passage of the Dayton Peace Accords in November 1995, which put an end to the three and a half years of bloody ethnic strife in Bosnia. Milosevic was invited to Dayton and treated as an honoured guest and a legitimate head of state, because the Clinton administration was seeking a peace settlement that left Milosevic in power.²¹ Again, Kosovo should have taken Dayton as an opportunity to unmask Milosevic's inhumanity and request the arrest of a war criminal while he was in the US.

In fact, referring back to the London meeting in April 1992, which was called to discuss the impending war in Bosnia, the notion that the West did not approve Kosovo as a 'nation/republic' had already become apparent, given that members of the Rugova delegation were treated as observers rather than participants. However, not until the Dayton Peace did the Kosovo Albanians realise how 'unimportant' they were to the West: the status of their province was left unresolved yet Milosevic emerged as the region's power broker. Although Richard Holbrooke raised the complexity of the situation in Kosovo and the overriding need to ensure Milosevic's compliance with Dayton Peace, what the UN emphasised was only continuing sanctions against Belgrade until Serbia started to deal with positively and directly with the Kosovars, leaving Kosovo deliberately sidelined.²² Thus, treated as an internal concern of Serbia, Kosovo was removed from the bargaining table. This left the Kosovars disillusioned with the heedless behavior of the international community.

²⁰ David Binder (1992) 'Bush Warns Serbs Not to Widen War', *The New York Times*, 28 December.

²¹ Steven Ludsin (2005) 'Kosovo, Genocide and the Dayton Agreement', *The Wall Street Journal*, 1 December.

²² Carole Rogel (2003) p. 175.

The disillusionment was further heightened when Serbia and Montenegro were officially recognised by the EU as the Yugoslav states in April 1996. On the contrary, Kosovo, as the head of the newly established US Information Office in Pristina claimed in June 1996, was still regarded as a part of Yugoslavia and it should continue to remain so.²³ As a result, all this suffering drove Kosovo to make up its mind to resort to a military approach.

What the Kosovars learned from Dayton Peace was that Rugova's pacifism led nowhere. Following the rejection of previous pacifist policies, Kosovars changed to favour a more military approach. In fact, the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), a Kosovo Albanian paramilitary organisation which sought the separation of Kosovo from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, had already been formed in 1990, but remained relatively passive until 1995. Founded as a military wing, the KLA began to undertake a series of guerrilla activities against Serbia in 1996, including sporadic attacks on police stations and Yugoslav government offices. Through alleging that the Serbs had killed the Albanian civilians as part of an ethnic cleansing campaign, the KLA successfully took the credit for its operations against the Serbs.²⁴ In response, the Serbian authorities denounced the KLA as a terrorist group and intensified the police rule in the region by increasing its security forces. The Serbia efforts to isolate the KLA by giving them the label of terrorism, however, resulted in the counter-productive effect that helped boost the credibility of the KLA among the Kosovo Albanians. The condemnation of the Serbs trying to cleanse Kosovo of its ethnic Albanian population was highlighted by two funerals in October and November 1997 for the KLA men killed by the Serbs, which saw 13,000 and 20,000 mourners in attendance respectively. Thus 'the killings continued, the retaliations by the KLA increased, and support for the KLA grew'.²⁵ This campaign eventually precipitated a major crackdown of Yugoslav military forces, leading to the Kosovo crisis in 1998 and 1999.

The deteriorating violence in Kosovo undoubtedly alarmed the West. But instead of criticising the military intervention led by Milosevic and Serb militias within Kosovo,

²³ Carole Rogel (2004) p. 77.

²⁴ Stuart Allan and Barbie Zelizer (2004) *Reporting War: Journalism in Wartime*, London: Routledge.

²⁵ Carole Rogel (2003) p. 175.

which had facilitated 'an exodus of Kosovo Albanians and a refugee crisis', Robert Gelbart, the US representative in Pristina, attempted to lecture the Albanians about engaging in violence. He publicly called the KLA 'without any question a terrorist group', because 'the KLA engaged in tit-for-tat attacks with Serbian nationalists in Kosovo, reprisals against ethnic Albanians who "collaborated" with the Serbian government'.²⁶ This was warmly welcomed by the Serbs who interpreted it as 'a go-ahead to clamp down on "terrorists" in "their" province'.²⁷ At the same time, the UK sent its foreign minister Robin Cook, less assertive than Gelbart, to Belgrade to persuade Milosevic to negotiate with the moderate Albanians. However, Milosevic overreacted to the visit, rejecting Cook in person and refusing to see any other envoy. The West was finally awakened to realise how bad the situation had become and how tough Milosevic was. On March 7, 1998, Madeleine Albright, the US Secretary of State, strongly declared 'We are not going to stand by and watch the Serbian authorities do in Kosovo what they can no longer get away with doing in Bosnia'.²⁸ Albright's view was not to make the same mistake as in Bosnia. Shortly after the 'Contact Group' countries (US, UK, France, Germany, Italy and Russia) convened a meeting in London to discuss the issue of Kosovo, Robert Gelbart went to meet with Milosevic and warned him about NATO's possible use of military force against Serbia.²⁹ He also urged the Clinton administration to bomb Serbia, which was originally rejected by Sandy Berger, the US National Security Advisor. Later in March, the UN Security Council passed the Resolution 1160 to condemn both the excessive use of force by Yugoslavia and all acts of terrorism by the KLA.³⁰ Moreover, in May, Richard Holbrooke, 'Milosevic's drinking buddy from Dayton', was chosen to lobby and convince Milosevic to have a talk with Rugova. Thereafter on May 15, the first-ever meeting between Milosevic and Rugova was held on time, though dialogue quickly broke down. Rugova, unwilling to give up, continued to spare no effort to achieve a peaceful agreement. In May 1998, Rugova and other

²⁶ Michael Moran (2006) 'Terrorist Groups and Political Legitimacy', *Council on Foreign Relations*, 16 March.

²⁷ Gary Dempsey (1998) 'An Accomplice to War in Kosovo?', *Cato Institute*, 5 August. Carole Rogel (2003).

²⁸ Madeleine Albright (2003) *Madam Secretary: A Memoir*, New York: Miramax Books, pp. 380-381. Steven Erlanger (1998) 'Albright Warns Serbs on Kosovo Violence', *The New York Times*, 8 March.

²⁹ Eric Moskowitz and Jeffrey Lantis (2004) 'Conflict in the Balkans' in Karl Inderfurth and Loch Johnson (ed.) *Fateful Decision: Inside the National Security Council*, New York: Oxford University Press, p. 256.

³⁰ The UNSC Resolution 1160, 31 March 1998.

Kosovo Albanian officials went to Washington to see President Clinton, Vice President Gore and the Secretary of State Albright. The meeting held in the Oval Office eventually authorised Clinton to offer support to those Kosovo Albanians. Early next month, Rugova met with the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, requesting immediate UN or NATO intervention.

Although the US had promised 'no more Bosnias', it felt reluctant to get involved when a Serbia national referendum held on April 23, 1998 showed that 95% of the Serbs rejected foreign mediation to solve the Kosovo crisis.³¹ In fact, the US attitude by far had remained unchanged: let the Yugoslav government bargain with the KLA, which was 'a policy Washington would never consider for itself—negotiating with a group (the KLA) that it had identified as a terrorist organisation'.³² Not until the NATO Ministerial Meeting did a tougher and firmer US stance become clear. William Cohen, the US Secretary of Defence, urged the NATO defence ministers to 'examine all military options...not confine it to air or land or sea or any combination of the three'.³³ Other ministers who worried about the tense situation in the region as well, decided to rattle Milosevic by conducting air exercises, namely the 'Determined Falcon'.³⁴ 85 NATO warplanes were sent out to fly over Albania and Macedonia in the 'Balkan Air Show', forewarning Milosevic about NATO's capability to rapidly project power into the region. Furthermore, Richard Holbrooke was again sent to negotiate with Milosevic, who agreed to a monitoring force for Kosovo, the Kosovo Diplomatic Observer Mission (KDOM). However, the Serbia cooperative gesture did not last long. One month after the KDOM launched monitoring operations, the Serbian forces intensified their summer offensive by attacking the KLA and Kosovo Albanian villages in the Drenica region, which largely reversed Albanian gains.³⁵ On the other hand, at least 34 bodies of people the Serb police claimed had been killed by the KLA were discovered in a canal near the village of Goldjane, triggering serious allegation against the KLA.³⁶ To cease the violence, the UN Security Council approved the Resolution 1199 on September 23, demanding the Serb withdrawal and

³¹ 'Serb "No" to Foreign Mediation in Kosovo', *BBC News*, 23 April 1998.

³² Gary Dempsey (1998) 'An Accomplice to War in Kosovo?', *Cato Institute*, 5 August.

³³ 'NATO Weighing Military Options for Kosovo', *CNN*, 11 June 1998.

³⁴ Javier Solana (1998) 'Statement on Exercise "Determined Falcon"', *NATO*, 13 June.

³⁵ Robert Elsie (2004) *Historical Dictionary of Kosovo*, Lanham: Scarecrow Press, p. 98.

³⁶ Heike Krieger (ed.) (2001) *The Kosovo Conflict and International Law: An Analytical Documentation 1974-1999*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 108.

refugee return.³⁷ However, what the Resolution resulted in was only severe violation. For example, the bloody Serb forces, ignored the UNSCR 1199 and continued to kill another 35 villagers in and around Gornje Obrinje, 21 of which came from a single family.³⁸

Understanding that both the Serbs and Albanians would refuse to comply fully with the Resolution, NATO began to discuss the legitimacy of using military force. The permission to issue an activation warning (ACTWARN) was finally released to NATO's Supreme Commander in the following NATO Defence Ministerial Meeting in Vilamoura, Portugal.³⁹ Regarding the ACTWARN as the first real step in preparation for airstrikes, NATO further doubled its legitimacy of intervention by adapting French President Jacques Chirac's famous reasoning that a humanitarian emergency allowed it. Other NATO members like Germany also agreed on the necessity to wage the 'first humanitarian war in history against a genocide'.⁴⁰ At the end of that month, favouring airstrikes against Serbia, Albright requested the administration to brief the Capitol Hill about the plan.⁴¹ However, Albright's proposal encountered Congressional resistance, leaving the administration no chance to send ground troops to Kosovo, even as peacekeepers. Ironically, the final decision for action was pushed by the Russian who gave 'a backhanded go-ahead' to the Contact Group leaders when they met at London's Heathrow airport on October 8. Igor Ivanov, Russia's foreign minister, told the group that 'should intervention in Serbia be proposed to the UN, Russia (China, too) would veto it; however, if NATO intervened, Russia would protest, but, naturally, would have no recourse'.⁴²

While NATO was designing an 'activation order' (ACTORD) to authorise preparations for a limited bombing campaign, a sign of peace was emerging in

³⁷ The UNSC Resolution 1199, 23 September 1998.

³⁸ 'A Week of Terror in Drenica: Humanitarian Law Violations in Kosovo', *Human Rights Watch*, 1 February 1999.

³⁹ 'Statement by the Secretary General: Following the ACTWARN Decision', *NATO*, 24 September 1998.

⁴⁰ Eric Rouleau (1999) 'French Diplomacy Adrift in Kosovo', *Le Monde Diplomatique*, December.

⁴¹ President Clinton was viewed as 'a champion of human rights'. The Clinton administration had made it clear since 1993 that it had little patience for those who challenge the universality of human rights. Seven years later, Madeleine Albright further this view when she convened a conference to draft a global declaration on the universal principles of democracy. See 'Clinton Foreign Policy', *Foreign Policy*, No. 121, Nov-Dec 2000, p. 19.

⁴² Carole Rogel (2003) p. 176.

Kosovo, which made NATO cautiously suspend its plan temporarily.⁴³ This sign of peace, the so-called 'October Agreement', was actually achieved and secured by Richard Holbrooke. After intense negotiations, on October 13, Holbrooke persuaded Milosevic to agree on 'Serbian compliance with the UN Resolution 1199, a ceasefire, troop withdrawals, elections, substantial autonomy for Kosovo and other confidence-building measures'.⁴⁴ In addition, according to the Agreement, the Kosovo Verifying Mission (KVM) formed by unarmed monitors from the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), would work together with the KDOM in monitoring the violence in the region. Thus, NATO extended the deadline of ACTORD till October 27. In order to seize this rare opportunity for peace, General Wesley Clark, NATO Supreme Commander, and General Klaus Naumann, Chairman of the NATO Military Committee, travelled together to Belgrade on October 24. This timely visit resulted in Milosevic's agreement on reducing forces in Kosovo to pre-March 1998 levels. Thereafter, the end of that month witnessed thousands of the Serb security forces withdrawing from Kosovo and thousands of Kosovo Albanians descending from the hills. Clinton welcomed those developments which would offer a diplomatic solution to the crisis, yet he also warned that 'Commitments are not compliance. Balkan graveyards are filled with President Milosevic's broken promises'. UK Prime Minister Tony Blair shared the same view, saying that though the agreement provided a 'breakthrough', NATO was still 'prepared to use force if necessary'.⁴⁵

These concerns proved to be well founded. As winter threatened, border clashes and skirmishes in Kosovo bounced back due to Serbia's displeasure with the Macedonians who allowed NATO to position troops on its territory. To deal with Serbia's challenge and to defend peacekeepers in Kosovo, NATO deployed an 'extraction force' (XFOR) in Macedonia. The Serbs, rather than being deterred, massacred 45 inhabitants in the Albanian village of Racak on January 15 in retaliation for the KLA attack on four Serbia policemen.⁴⁶ This tragedy further convinced the Contact Group and NATO that direct intervention against Serbia was imperative. In light of the Racak massacre,

⁴³ 'Statement by the Secretary General: Following Decision on the ACTORD', *NATO*, 13 October 1998.

⁴⁴ Bill Vann (1998) 'The Holbrooke-Milosevic Agreement on Kosovo', *World Socialist Web Site*, 20 October.

⁴⁵ 'World: Europe Agreement in Belgrade', *BBC News*, 13 October 1998.

⁴⁶ 'Special Report: Massacre of Civilians in Racak', *Balkan Witness*, 17 January 1999.

Albright's push for a US or NATO ultimatum finally won at a meeting of top US foreign policy advisers. The Contact Group, following the US statement, issued an ultimatum to the Kosovo Albanians and Serbs ten days later, calling them to start peace talks at Rambouillet, France on February 6. It was clear to everyone concerned that this would be 'the last opportunity for a comprehensive settlement'.⁴⁷

On the Serbia side, although Milosevic refused to attend, he promised that representatives of the Serbs would show up at Rambouillet and the Serbian embassy in Paris would support the delegation as well. But those Serbs sent to the meeting turned out to be no one of importance besides the Bishop Artemije. Rude as usual, they also warned the Kosovars that any representative of them would be arrested if they did come to France. It was France that saved the conference in such an emergency. Providing the Kosovars with necessary travel documents and transportation without delay, the French finally received a delegation of 16, the leading Albanians of which were the pacifist Rugova; the 29-year-old militant KLA head, Hashim Thaci; and the editor of *Koha Ditore*, Veton Surroi. However, no better than the Serbian delegation, the loose Albanian one 'made up of a disparate group, individuals belonging to rival factions, who in some cases had never met one another', found it hard to reach an internal consensus to sign agreements.⁴⁸ This 'peace conference' expected to see the birth of two documents, the first of which would contain non-negotiable principles that guaranteed the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia while rejecting to allow Kosovo independence at that time, and protected human rights for both the Serbs and Albanians. The second document, the so-called 'interim agreement', aimed to deal with matters such as a ceasefire, a representative assembly for Kosovo, and elections to it. Though they debated on specific issues at length and expressed particular concerns about provision for a future referendum on independence, the Albanians also treated the conference as a joke.

This time, the Americans took the initiative to salvage negotiations. President Clinton, after a fadeout due to the impeachment for his 'inappropriate relationship' with Monica Lewinsky since August 1998, called a meeting with his foreign policy team to

⁴⁷ Javier Solana (1999) p. 116.

⁴⁸ Carole Rogel (2003) p. 177.

discuss 'NATO planning, US costs and the Kosovo Force (KFOR) exit strategy' on February 11, 1999.⁴⁹ Following the end of his impeachment drama, President Clinton delivered a radio address immediately to specify his intention that 4,000 US peacekeepers would be sent to Kosovo after a ceasefire.⁵⁰ Furthermore, distrust of the Serb's willingness to sign the agreement led Clinton to seek cooperation with the Albanians first. In an attempt to get the Albanians to accept the agreement, Albright flew to France for the last days of talks, during which she promised the Kosovars an independence referendum in three years.⁵¹ As requested, the Rambouillet conference was paused to offer the Kosovar delegation a period of time to consult with the Albanians at home. On March 18, the Kosovo Albanians finally signed the agreement, whereas, the Serbs still refused to do so. This 'anticipated failure' of peace talks finally allowed the US to say that the Albanians were the 'good guys', which, according to some historians, met the US real purpose of proving to Europe definitively that the Serbs were intransigent.⁵² President Clinton then seized the opportunity to meet with Congressional leaders to discuss the US KFOR role. Meanwhile, Richard Holbrooke and Christopher Hill went to meet with Milosevic to urge him to accept the NATO settlement. However, the negotiation did not bring any improvement, affirming that there was 'zero point zero per cent' chance of a deal on the Serb side. What was worse, on March 20, 40,000 Serbian forces quickly moved into Kosovo after the leave of the KVM. Unfolding new offensives in north-eastern and north-central parts of Kosovo, the Serb troops became more and more aggressive. Meanwhile, Milosevic continued to purge his leadership by fostering hardliners in power in both the government and the army. In a last ditch effort to avoid military intervention, Richard Holbrooke was appointed to deliver a final ultimatum to Milosevic who again rejected any concession.⁵³ So far, all the diplomatic efforts to achieve peace in Kosovo had failed without exception. This, as the French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine said, further convinced the West that there was 'little prospect of avoiding NATO air strikes against Yugoslavia'.⁵⁴

⁴⁹ Julie Kim and Steven Woehrel (2008) *Kosovo and US Policy: Background to Independence*, CRS Report to Congress.

⁵⁰ President Clinton (1999) 'The President's Radio Address', 13 February.

⁵¹ Madeleine Albright (2005).

⁵² Ivo H. Daalder and Michael E. O'Hanlon (2000) *Winning Ugly: NATO's War to Save Kosovo*, Washington: Brookings Institute Press, p. 89.

⁵³ 'Kosovo Talks Break Off', *BBC News*, 23 March 1999.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

5.4 The '78-day war'

On March 24, the Kosovo air campaign, also known as the '78-day war' began. It had no specific UN Security Council authorisation. Thus, based on previous UN resolutions that had called for full and prompt implementation of the agreements Milosevic had signed with the OSCE and NATO, the US-led NATO served as the main force to undertake airstrikes. One of the reasons why the US chose to bypass the UN Security Council was because the forecast of a consensus among Security Council members was not promising. As Igor Ivanov stated previously, Russia and China would veto the proposal of intervention if it was raised at the UN Security Council meeting, however, Russia and China would only protest rather than prevent if NATO did intervene. More importantly, the US-led NATO force would maximise strategic freedom and flexibility, compared with the efficacy of the UN-led one. When the decision to fight a war in Kosovo was made, Russia's Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov cancelled his trip to Washington in mid-flight without hesitation to show Russia's opposition to the launching of strikes against Yugoslavia.⁵⁵ Hence, the rising condemnation on the NATO attack postponed the Russian Duma's vote for the Start II treaty. Furthermore, the Russians continued to press the US and NATO even after NATO had actually engaged into Kosovo. Russian President Yeltsin declared against bombing or a NATO ground war, and warned the US and its allies that Russia was ready to participate in a European or worldwide war. Gennadi Seleznev, President of the Duma, even proclaimed that Yeltsin had prepared nuclear missiles to target Serbia's attackers. With regard to this, Viktor Chernomyrdin writing in the Washington Post warned that a continuation of the air raids would set the Russia-US contacts back by several decades: 'The world has never in this decade been so close as now to the brink of nuclear war'.⁵⁶ But none of these drew serious US attention, let alone stopped the campaign. In the meantime, the Alliance had persisted in maintaining a unified NATO command structure.⁵⁷ As a result, later after denying the charge of nuclear missiles, Yeltsin desired to salvage the relationship with the West. Viktor Chernomyrdin was appointed as special envoy to the Balkan while the hard-

⁵⁵ Jim Lobe (1999) 'Conflict-Kosovo: Dealing While Denouncing', *Inter Press Service*, 28 March.

⁵⁶ Viktor Chernomyrdin (1999) 'Comments: Bombs Rule Out Talk of Peace', *The Washington Post*, 27 March.

⁵⁷ Michel Chossudovsky (1999) 'NATO's War of Aggression in Yugoslavia: Who Are the War Criminals?', *Global Research*, 15 May.

line Prime Minister Primakov was fired.

While acknowledging the UN's insufficient capability compared with NATO, critics proposed another question: 'Why did NATO, rather than any other organisations such as the EU, the WEU, become the primary instrument of choice for intervention in Kosovo?' Ellen Hallams believed that three key factors were critical in ensuring NATO's irreplaceable position: 'NATO's position as the primary guarantor of European security; the experience engendered by NATO's mission in Bosnia; and the US leadership of the alliance'.⁵⁸ However, since the US leadership and capability dominated NATO's military performance in Kosovo, why did the US not undertake unilateral action against Serbia? This suggestion seemed to be more acceptable when taking strategic flexibility into account, but it simply was not the appetite both within the Clinton administration and amongst the American public who favoured 'multilateralising' the use of force in line with scaling down the US international commitments. In other words, the Clinton doctrine in fact held that the US should, together with its allies, intervene wherever necessary to prevent genocide.⁵⁹ Thus, the US chose NATO to commence airstrikes, the mission of which was not only to avert a humanitarian catastrophe but also to preserve NATO's leadership in European security affairs.⁶⁰ These two rationales for NATO's intervention in Kosovo were not arbitrarily concluded. Instead, they were drawn from prudential considerations. As Albright stated, it was necessary to affirm the moral imperative behind NATO's intervention, given that too many massacres in Kosovo had heavily shocked the world.⁶¹ Tony Blair, the British Prime Minister and George Robertson, the UK Defence Minister, were also strong supporters of the humanitarian intervention course, emphasising the wider and fundamental need to avert a moral and humanitarian catastrophe. The other underlying rationale, namely, to guarantee NATO's or Washington's credibility and leadership, was regarded as the real driving force of intervention. 'In Bosnia NATO's credibility had been on the line because of its failure to intervene earlier in the crisis; in Kosovo the alliance's credibility was at stake

⁵⁸ Ellen Hallams (2010) p. 38.

⁵⁹ Clinton Foreign Policy', p. 20. Michael Mandelbaum (1999) 'A Perfect Failure: NATO's War Against Yugoslavia', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 78, No. 5, p. 5.

⁶⁰ John Peters, Stuart Johnson, Nora Bensahel, Timothy Liston and Traci Williams (2001) *European Contributions to Operation Allied Air Force: Implications for Transatlantic Cooperation*, Santa Monica: RAND.

⁶¹ Madeleine Albright (2005).

because it could not afford to repeat the mistakes it had made in Bosnia.⁶² From the perspective of Americans who had just moved their NATO enlargement plan one step forward by inviting Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic into NATO, they felt eager to spare no effort to safeguard their hard-won victory. The US efforts for NATO enlargement not only demonstrated the fundamental US commitment to NATO, but also affirmed the belief that the US had to remain at the heart of any emerging European security architecture. As a result, the US deeply committed itself to NATO to participate in the Kosovo crisis, predicting that the success in Kosovo would help consolidate the US leadership in Europe and unite the Alliance.

Although many other officials wanted a quicker resolution in line with the lesson of Bosnia, President Clinton ruled out the use of ground troops in Kosovo in his televised address, for fear of creating casualties and thus undermining public support as well as the unity of NATO members. Outlined by President Clinton, NATO's strike plan OPLAN 10601 defined three principal objectives: 'to demonstrate the seriousness of NATO's opposition to aggression; to deter Milosevic from "continuing and escalating his attacks on helpless civilians"; and to damage Serbia's capacity to wage war against Kosovo by seriously diminishing its military capabilities'.⁶³ To that end, the action NATO envisaged at the very beginning was one which was confined to light bombing in the Belgrade suburbs, breaking Serbian air defence systems and decreasing Serbian command and control capabilities, which would only last a few days. However, another two sequential phases of operations were formulated just in case, though the first phase of establishing air superiority over Serbia was sufficient to achieve NATO's objectives. The second and the third phases referred to 'attack military targets inside Kosovo and Serbian reinforcements in Yugoslavia south of the 44th parallel, and expand air operations to cover a wide range of military targets throughout Yugoslavia' separately.⁶⁴

⁶² Ellen Hallams (2010).

⁶³ President Clinton (1999) 'Remarks Announcing Airstrikes Against Serbian Targets in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)', 24 March. Benjamin Lambeth (2001) *NATO's Air War for Kosovo: A Strategic and Operational Assessment*, Santa Monica: RAND, p. 19.

⁶⁴ John Peters, *et al.* (2001).

5.5 NATO's sorry performance

Stance Suspecting NATO's ambition to carry out substantive military actions, the Serbs made themselves hard to intimidate. The next day after the war onset, the Serb troops provocatively killed more than sixty Kosovo Albanians near the village of Bela Crvka.⁶⁵ Yugoslavia with uncompromising attitude then fearlessly broke off diplomatic relations with the US, the UK, Germany and France to demonstrate their readiness for war. On the other hand, the Kosovo Albanians generally welcomed NATO engagement, but as soon as the bombing began, they had no choice but to leave the province by special 'refugee trains'. According to statistics, about 300,000 Kosovars fled in the first week alone; and more than 848,000 Kosovars crossed Kosovo's borders into Macedonia, Albania and Montenegro throughout the war.⁶⁶ The Serb authorities saw the Albanians' departure as a great opportunity to confiscate personal property ownership documents for the Serbs, which aimed to make it difficult for the Albanians to return. Ironically, this inadvertent chain reaction ensured nothing but NATO's bombing in Serbia should be blamed for the refugee exodus. NATO was further criticised for giving the Serbs a way to realise their dream of cleansing Kosovo of the Albanians, the accusation of which forced NATO to help feed and house the refugees.

Plan There were many factors that created NATO's unsatisfactory behaviour in the combat. As Carole Rogel indicated, the refusal of taking sides clearly led NATO being unable to coordinate adequately with the KLA, which could have been of great help on the ground. More importantly, 'NATO, which had "stumbled into war" without a real plan, and certainly no Plan B, escalated war efforts gradually'.⁶⁷ Although Javier Solana had successfully secured the approval of all nineteen members to unfold the military action, he was not able to secure consensus on operational plans. In fact, debates had already arisen about how to execute the conflict, with various NATO powers pressing for different plans. For example, the US opposed sending ground troops; France was against bombing bridges, and Greece felt reluctant

⁶⁵ Human Rights Watch, 17 April 1999.

⁶⁶ Carole Rogel (2003) p. 178.

⁶⁷ Ivo H. Daalder and Michael E. O'Hanlon (2000).

to join due to overwhelming public opinion against war.⁶⁸ These different preferences developed into disagreements on the battlefield, resulting in delayed operational plans. For example, one tremendous delay occurred on April 4 when policymakers decided to deploy 24 Apache attack helicopters (Task Force Hawk) and 2,000 protecting forces in Albania. The reason why the deployment was put off at the last minute referred to the officials' debate over whether the helicopters would move the US closer to a ground war.⁶⁹

Capability Another controversial factor leading to NATO's bad performance was related to NATO's insufficient capability in guiding and coordinating a campaign. Reportedly, NATO bombs often went astray or targeted some wrong buildings, evoking suspicions and feeding anti-US sentiment. For example, marked as NATO's first mishap in combat, three missiles hit a residential area in the town of Aleksinac on April 6, killing many civilians. A week later, NATO became breaking news again by mistakenly striking a number of Kosovo Albanian refugees and causing at least 60 deaths. Following the command of bombing bridges, a civilian bus on a bridge near Pristina was accidentally destroyed. Moreover, a market and a hospital near Nis were accidentally targeted when NATO tried to strike an airfield with a cluster bomb. Compared with those accidents, the day of May 7 witnessed the biggest blunder NATO had made in Kosovo when the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade was bombed. However, the accident, killing three and wounding 20, 'could have been avoided if the CIA, which chose the target, had updated its map of the city'.⁷⁰ The UN Security Council immediately called a meeting to discuss Washington's 'terrible mistake' that caused a serious diplomatic crisis between the US and China. Although they were concerned about the Chinese reaction, the US quickly ignored its mistakes and recklessly bombed Korisa when the Serb forces used 87 Kosovo Albanians as human shields. Also in May, a KLA position in Kosare was bombed accidentally, causing 67 deaths; a bridge in Varvarin was destroyed, killing 11 civilians, and a residential area in Surdulica was damaged mistakenly when a NATO missile went off-course, killing

⁶⁸ Carole Rogel (2003) p. 178.

⁶⁹ William Owens (2001) *Lifting the Fog of War*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, pp. 199-200. Keith Shimko (2010) *The Iraq Wars and America's Military Revolution*, New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 127-129.

⁷⁰ Carole Rogel (2003) p. 179.

at least 20 civilians.⁷¹ There seemed no reasonable excuse to explain these costly mistakes except that NATO was short of sufficient capability in guiding and coordinating a campaign.

5.6 'End' of the war

Although lacking a non-neutral stance, a detailed operational plan, and sufficient capability in guiding and coordinating the campaign, NATO won the Kosovo war in the end. On April 22, NATO's 50th anniversary was celebrated in Washington, which overall helped maintain the unity of the Alliance and strengthen the relationship between Russia and the West. Yeltsin phoned Clinton with the summit underway, discussing the restart of contacts between Vice President Gore and the Russian special envoy to Kosovo Viktor Chernomyrdin. From a strategic perspective specifically, the summit also brought forward an intensification of the airstrikes, expanding target list to include petroleum depots, key road and rail bridges, railway lines, and radio and TV stations.⁷² Two days later, NATO formally announced its achievement of air superiority in the mid to high altitudes, marking the completion of the first phase of its operation plan. NATO then proceeded to the second phase though the Alliance's objectives had already been fully realised during the first phase. While NATO began to assert its superiority over Yugoslav troops in Kosovo, Yugoslavia filed a lawsuit against the Alliance at the International Court of Justice in The Hague, requesting provisional measures to stop NATO countries bombing immediately.⁷³ But NATO strikes on Belgrade were not called off. When the KLA was launching a counter-offensive to win a supply route into Kosovo, Viktor Chernomyrdin went to meet with Milosevic who admitted concerns about growing international pressure. Chernomyrdin was expected to present Yugoslavia with 'concrete proposals' which included 'a halt to NATO air strikes, followed by a withdrawal of Milosevic's forces from Kosovo and autonomy for the province'. But NATO insisted it would not halt air strikes until Yugoslav forces pulled out of Kosovo. If Milosevic refused to cooperate, as US Defence Secretary William Cohen said, 'We will start to attack for

⁷¹ 'A Kosovo Chronology', *Frontline*.

⁷² NATO summit, 23-25 April 1999.

⁷³ Natalino Ronzitti (1999) 'Lessons of International Law from NATO's Armed Intervention Against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia', *The International Spectator*, Vol. XXXIV, No. 3, pp. 45-54.

more hours, more targets and from more directions'.⁷⁴ Further, to enhance the efforts the KLA had stalled, NATO decided to increase its ground forces (peacekeepers) in neighbouring Macedonia to 48,000, who were expected to serve as the core of an invasion force.

Yugoslavia, however, was not threatened until NATO announced its decision to help the Albanians with their road network construction. Noting 'the road's "dual-use" potential for carrying NATO ground troops', Yugoslavia quickly sent out signals that they were ready to cooperate with NATO as long as the UN was the ultimate arbiter.⁷⁵ The G8 countries, having agreed on a peace proposal that called for a civil and security presence in Kosovo, decided to have talks at Koenigswinter (outside Bonn) to reach a final settlement in ending NATO's seven-week old Balkan campaign. The plan agreed by all G8 ministers was concluded as G8 principles: safe return of refugees; preservation of the current borders of Yugoslavia and its neighbouring states; disarmament of the KLA. The G8 countries also promised to set up a UN administration for Kosovo and a framework for autonomy.⁷⁶ Albright highly appreciated Russia Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov's acceptance of a military force in Kosovo, and emphasised Russia's agreement was the most significant point of Thursday's proposal.⁷⁷ In return, the agreement dropped any reference to NATO's role in the proposed military contingent responsible for establishing a secure environment in Kosovo. Thus, the word, Kosovo Force (KFOR), was adopted, but troops from NATO members were required to make up the core of the force. In response, Yugoslavia immediately informed Germany that they were ready to accept G8 principles for ending bombing. On June 3, after mediators, namely Vice President Gore, the Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbot, the Russian special envoy Viktor Chernomyrdin, and a neutral mediator the Finn Martti Ahtisari, pressed Milosevic to give up, Belgrade formally accepted the outline of a new Kosovo peace deal providing for an end to the conflict and for a NATO peacekeeping force to enter Kosovo.

⁷⁴ 'Kosovo Peace Efforts Gathers Pace', *BBC News*, 30 April 1999.

⁷⁵ Stephen Hosmer (2001) *The Conflict Over Kosovo: Why Milosevic Decided to Settle When He Did*, Santa Monica: RAND, p. 113.

⁷⁶ 'G8 Countries Endorse Kosovo Plan', *CNN*, 6 May 1999.

⁷⁷ Madeleine Albright (2005).

President Clinton and the allies cautiously greeted Milosevic's change to a cooperative attitude on one hand, and seized the opportunity to hold another G8 meeting in Cologne to discuss details of the UN authorisation on the other. On 9 June, NATO and Yugoslavia officials signed a Military Technical Agreement to govern the Serb withdrawal of all its military, parliamentary, and police forces.⁷⁸ The next day, the UN Security Council finally adopted the Resolution 1244, bringing the war officially to an end. As the Resolution prescribed, international civil and military authorities in Kosovo could be deployed, and the KFOR formed by 50,000 NATO troops could be established to guarantee the safe return of hundreds of thousands of refugees and to ensure no further ethnic cleansing took place.⁷⁹ The UN then set up the Mission in Kosovo, which was headed by Bernard Kouchner, a French founder of Doctors without Borders. He was assigned with three tasks: 'to ease the Kosovars back into the idea of autonomy within Serbia or Yugoslavia; to seek the cooperation of local leaders, both Albanian and Serb; and to prevent the abuse of human rights'.⁸⁰ On the other hand, the KFOR, who were supposed to enter Kosovo on June 12, got surprised by an incident that occurred hours before their arrival in Kosovo. Two hundred Russian troops, who were among the occupying forces in Bosnia, travelled through Serbia and moved into Kosovo with fifty vehicles before NATO, taking control of the Pristina airport.⁸¹ The Russians expected the Alliance to exclude them from the post-war reconstruction, whereas NATO welcomed Russia's participation in the KFOR, for it would boost the rebuilding of Kosovo.

The Albanians began flooding back into Kosovo. The first three weeks saw over 600,000 refugees returning, which marked one of the most rapid refugee returns in history. By late autumn 1999, all of the 848,000 Albanian refugees moved back.⁸² In addition, the Kosovars persuaded themselves to adapt to the temporary condition of autonomy, and to postpone assembly elections and a referendum on independence to the near future. So far, the situation in Kosovo had been generally stabilised and the victory of NATO could be claimed. But not all analysts agreed that NATO was successful in Kosovo. For example, Michael Mandelbaum concluded NATO's

⁷⁸ Military Technical Agreement, *NATO*, 9 June 1999.

⁷⁹ The UNSC Resolution 1244, 1999.

⁸⁰ Carole Rogel (2003) p. 180.

⁸¹ Andrew Felkay (2002) *Yeltsin's Russia and the West*, Westport: Praeger Publisher, p. 206

⁸² Carole Rogel (2003) p. 180.

intervention in Kosovo to be a 'perfect failure'. He regarded NATO's Yugoslav war as a 'military success' in that 'the alliance's air forces carried out their missions with dispatch and the assault forced the Serb military's withdrawal from the southern Yugoslav province of Kosovo'. But it was also a 'political failure' in terms of 'the wider political consequences of the war'.⁸³ Hence, evaluations on the merits and demerits of NATO, which was chosen to be the leading actor to perform in Kosovo, varied.

5.7 A double-edged sword

An official US Defence Department report to Congress in October 1999 concluded that 'As a watershed in NATO's long history, Operation Allied Force (OAF) was an overwhelming success, NATO accomplished its mission and achieved all of its strategic, operational, and tactical goals in the face of an extremely complex set of challenges'.⁸⁴ Thereby, the British Prime Minister Tony Blair regarded OAF as 'the first test and the first occasion for a whole new approach to international affairs'—a new 'doctrine of international community'.⁸⁵ The crucial factors that facilitated the victory of NATO in Kosovo mainly referred to NATO's unique advantages compared with any other organisation. On one hand, NATO's institutional structures offered NATO a high degree of legitimacy; and on the other, its military capabilities provided NATO with sufficient ability to achieve its overall objectives. NATO, a 19-member alliance, had achieved a clear consensus on the need to intervene, and remained steadfast and unified till the end, demonstrating its institutional benefits of working within a collective alliance. Thus, it was NATO's decision-making process and the requirement of generating consensus before acting that gave NATO's intervention an important degree of legitimacy. Moreover, NATO's incomparable military capabilities also contributed to its overall success in Kosovo. Other alliances such as the UN, the EU and the WEU would not be able to achieve what NATO had accomplished in Kosovo due to their lack of military capabilities to successfully engage in such a severe crisis.

⁸³ Michael Mandelbaum (1999) pp. 2-8.

⁸⁴ 'Joint Statement on the Kosovo After Action Review', *US Department of Defence*, 14 October 1999.

⁸⁵ Mark Webber (2009) 'The Kosovo War: A Recapitulation', *International Affairs*, Vol. 85, No. 3, p. 453.

However, although NATO made great contributions to prevent ethnic cleansing in Kosovo from escalating, it was also true that NATO did make a number of inexcusable mistakes during the combat, which could have been avoided if NATO had developed a viable and comprehensive strategy. According to Ellen Hallams, it was flawed assumptions on the part of NATO leaders that led to a flawed strategy. Firstly, what the officials desired was to confine the combat to light bombing in the Belgrade suburbs, which would only last a few days. This assumption adversely led to 'a strategy of gradualism that did much to undermine NATO's strategic credibility'.⁸⁶ But the irony was that only with this less ambitious strategy could the Alliance reach an agreement to intervene in Kosovo as soon as possible. There was no clear consensus within NATO for a more ambitious, long-term campaign, and it would take a long time to reach such a consensus if possible, given that too many operational constraints would be imposed by 19 members with different preferences. In fact, the Alliance itself was divided. 'Governments in Germany, Italy and the Czech Republic were split on the issue, while large majorities of Czech, Greek, Spanish and Portuguese public opinion were against OAF'.⁸⁷ Thus, a short-term campaign might not be the best strategy, whereas it was the only acceptable one. In addition to NATO members' disagreements over ambitious strategy and tactics, the US lacked willingness to undertake a long-term campaign as well. Feeling powerless to deal with heated domestic debates on whether the US interests were even at stake in Kosovo, the US found it hard to convince Americans that the US national interests were truly threatened by the Kosovo crisis. It was also the case in other NATO member states, many of which tried to hold together internal consensus between their own governments and societies.⁸⁸ Therefore, based on the common perception of NATO's restrictive nature of decision-making, both the US and other NATO members agreed to choose a less ambitious strategy, even though it was destined to weaken NATO's strategic credibility.

The second flawed assumption officials embraced was that airstrikes would be sufficient to defeat the Serbs. President Clinton had ruled out any possibility of the use of ground force in Kosovo since his televised address at the beginning of the

⁸⁶ Ellen Hallams (2010).

⁸⁷ Mark Webber (2009) p. 453.

⁸⁸ Dana Allin (2002) *NATO's Balkan Interventions*, New York: Oxford University Press.

intervention, for fear of creating casualties and thus undermining public support and the unity of the Alliance. Later, 'although support for a ground invasion within the US increased as the air campaign wore on, all NATO allies, with the exception of Britain, were guilty of failing to agree on the need for a ground war'.⁸⁹ In fact, the plan of sending ground troops to Kosovo seemed to be reasonable, but it was not feasible given the limited consensus NATO could generate from its 19 members. NATO's institutional structure was a double-edged sword, which brought NATO the legitimacy it needed as well as the constraints it had to tolerate. Thus, the air campaign was believed to be the only option that all NATO members could agree on, resulting in a strategy with no ground force participation that further crippled NATO's strategic credibility. Moreover, it was the US that contributed most to this flawed air campaign strategy, because the US refused to change the plan, even when introducing ground troops was urgently needed. The reason why the US resolutely denied the mobilisation of ground troops related to the concerns of its leadership and credibility. On one hand, the US was unwilling to confess that it had miscalculated the campaign, which would reduce its credibility to a large extent, and on the other, the US consistently desired to retain as much control as possible over planning, including 'the presence of "US only" rooms and documents', which would help maintain the US leadership in the operation.⁹⁰

Another flawed assumption related to the miscalculation of NATO members' interoperability. In Kosovo, the US proved to be the dominant military force within NATO, whereas the European member states made little contribution to NATO's success. Discovered from working through the Alliance, interoperability problems helped reveal the reality that the US military capabilities were far superior to those of the European members. First, there was no sufficient interoperable secure communications between the US and Europe due to their varied systems using different technologies. For example, ironically, to release Air Tasking Orders, the US commanders would have to print it out and physically hand it to the allies because NATO's own communication system was simply overloaded.⁹¹ Much of the planning

⁸⁹ Ellen Hallams (2010).

⁹⁰ Rebecca Johnson and Micah Zenko (2002) 'All Dressed Up and No Place to Go: Why NATO Should Be on the Front lines in the War on Terror', *Parameters*, Winter 2002-03, p. 55.

⁹¹ John Peters, *et al.* (2001) pp. 56-57.

for OAF was conducted in Heidelberg, not Mons, which 'contributed a great deal to the perceived disconnect between the United States and its NATO allies'.⁹² Second, there were disparities in NATO members' military capabilities, thereby burden-sharing became an area in which NATO proved 'spectacularly unsuccessful'.⁹³ NATO allies should have deployed and began execution more quickly than task-organised organisations created on an *ad hoc* basis, however, the reality only exposed European members' deficiency in military capabilities, which slowed down the overall operation of the Alliance. But in fact, the spread of contributions was not so disproportionate. Washington contributed some 60% of air sorties, while 13 other allies provided 'about the same share of their available aircraft for prosecuting the campaign' as well as 'virtually all the basing facilities, air traffic coordination, and supporting elements to keep an air armada of over 1,000 aircraft functioning throughout the conflict'.⁹⁴

5.8 The legacy of Kosovo

In addition to these weakness and deficiencies in alliance strategy, decision-making and military capabilities that had undermined NATO's credibility, NATO's overall success was also overshadowed by the concerns about various ethical, legal and moral issues. For the ethical issues, NATO seemed to presume that 'the lives of one side were more valuable than even the lives of those being saved'.⁹⁵ Therefore, a tragedy of approximately 10,000 deaths was caused by NATO bombing. For the legal and moral issues, 'it was fought in support of one group (Kosovo Albanians) in a civil war within a sovereign state (Serbia/Yugoslavia), a legally inviolable entity according to international law' and 'it was undertaken without UN consent, without the consent of the peoples in those NATO states that participated in it'.⁹⁶ In fact, all these controversial issues not only questioned the legitimacy of NATO's intervention in Kosovo, but also revealed some deep-rooted problems of NATO as an alliance responsible for European security. Although it was widely accepted that the

⁹² Rebecca Johnson and Micah Zenko (2002) p. 55.

⁹³ Katharina Coleman (2007) *International Organisation and Peace Enforcement: the Politics of International Legitimacy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 205.

⁹⁴ 'Kosovo/Operation Allied Force: After Action Report', 31 January 2000, pp. 24, 32.

⁹⁵ Carole Rogel (2003) p. 181.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

legitimacy of NATO's intervention stemmed from the humanitarian intervention course, the deeper source referred to the Alliance's own virtue. As stated above, NATO's institutional structure was a double-edged sword, which brought the US the legitimacy it needed as well as the constraints it had to tolerate.⁹⁷ However, the balance between giving the Alliance its required legitimacy and formulating a detailed plan that was sufficient to achieve all objectives was not easy to reach. Thus, over time, tensions among NATO members would increase dramatically, and conceptions of how NATO should operate in the future would vary greatly.

From the perspective of Europe, the extent to which the US had dominated all aspects of the mission in Kosovo was 'a rather shocking blow to European honour', highlighting 'the impotence of Europe's armed forces'.⁹⁸ Both the French and the Dutch believed that 'they were left out of a crucial decision process and that information-sharing suffered as a result'.⁹⁹ Although the US was criticised for its control over the Alliance's planning and execution in Kosovo, it was not the one to blame for Europe's voluntary dependence on the US military capabilities. The European members should share NATO's responsibilities and burdens together with the US, rather than becoming free riders of the US contributions to the Alliance. Hence in June 1999, the European members of NATO proposed to advance a European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) at the EU Cologne Summit, demonstrating their desire to fill the gap of capabilities between Washington and European capitals.¹⁰⁰ In other words, the ESDP, which was designed to increase the European capabilities, 'aimed at strengthening rather than weakening the transatlantic tie'.¹⁰¹ However, in response, the Clinton administration was initially reluctant to support the ESDP, believing that the attempt was driven by the French to challenge

⁹⁷ Wesley Clark (2001) *Waging Modern War: Bosnia, Kosovo and the Future of Combat*, New York: Public Affairs.

⁹⁸ Robert Kagan (2003) *Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order*, New York: Random House Large Print.

⁹⁹ John Peters, *et al.* (2001).

¹⁰⁰ Many scholars believed that European security and defence cooperation was primarily driven by a concern to respond directly to US power. Yet Lorenzo Cladi and Andrea Locatelli took a different view, arguing that the motivation behind the ESDP was essentially to advance collective action for regional 'milieu shaping' in Europe's near abroad. However, this idea was not widely spread at the very beginning. See Lorenzo Cladi and Andrea Locatelli (2012) 'Bandwagoning, Not Balancing: Why Europe Confounds Realism', *Contemporary Security Policy*, Vol. 33, No. 2, pp. 264-288.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

the US leadership.¹⁰² But the reluctance did not mean that the US refused to support the European efforts. In fact, the US had already sent out the signal of encouraging European members to develop their own capabilities since the launch of the Defence Capabilities Initiative (DCI) at the Washington summit. 'The US support for the DCI reflected not only a continuing US willingness to work with its NATO allies, but also an overwhelming desire to see any new European defence identity firmly located within NATO'.¹⁰³ Although the US expressed its positive support for those European members of the Alliance, it also made clear that Europe should avoid 'the three Ds', namely duplication, decoupling, and discrimination, with the bottom line being that 'the new European initiative should not in any way "decouple" or "delink" the US from Europe in the Alliance or the European defence efforts from those coordinated through NATO'.¹⁰⁴

While transatlantic tensions might be eased to secure NATO's short-term future, their deep-rooted nature made the problem almost impossible to be resolved once and for all. The question of how NATO should operate in the future received different answers from the members, further exposing the intra-alliance disputes. According to NATO's 'New Strategic Concept' released in 1999, the Alliance would 'stand ready, case-by-case and by consensus...to contribute to effective conflict prevention and to engage actively in crisis management, including crisis response operations', to strengthen the security and stability of the 'Euro-Atlantic' region.¹⁰⁵ However, disagreements on the geographic boundaries within which such 'crisis management' should take place, overshadowed the merits of NATO's transformation in the new round. The European members preferred the crisis response operations to be

¹⁰² Scholars like Charles Kupchan and Robert Zoellick welcomed the development of the ESDP, arguing that 'a strong Europe and a more balanced Atlantic partnership' would ensure the Alliance's integrity and viability. NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen also stated that 'I do not consider the development of European security and Defence Policy as competition with NATO, but complementary to NATO'. Yet, many in Washington saw the Europeanisation of the Alliance as the harbinger of transatlantic decoupling. For more information, see Charles Kupchan and Robert Zoellick (1999) 'It Can Be Lonely at the Top', *The Financial Times*, 13 December, Stuart Croft, Jolyon Howorth, Terry Terriff and Mark Webber (2000) 'NATO's Triple Challenge', *International Affairs*, Vol. 76, No. 3, p.496, NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, 18 November 2009, and Robert Hunter and Sven Biscop (2010) 'The United States, NATO and the European Union: Partnership in the Balance', *Atlantic Council*, 6 February.

¹⁰³ Ellen Hallams (2010).

¹⁰⁴ Stanley Sloan (2003) *NATO, the European Union and the Atlantic Community: The Transatlantic Bargain Reconsidered*, Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.

¹⁰⁵ The Alliance's Strategic Concept, NATO, 24 April 1999.

conducted within Europe, whereas the US expected to see NATO 'go out of area'. Although NATO has certainly shifted away from its focus on European security and towards a global agenda, 'the extent to which NATO is becoming a truly global alliance remains less clear'.¹⁰⁶ NATO's Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer further emphasised that NATO should remain 'an Alliance with global partners' rather than becoming a fully-fledged global alliance, with a global membership.¹⁰⁷ As a result, whether the European members' complaint that the US was seeking to turn NATO into an alliance akin to a 'global policeman' would increase the transatlantic tensions and thus halt the NATO transformation remained to be seen.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ Ellen Hallams (2009) 'NATO at 60: Going Global?', *International Journal*, Vol. 64, No. 2, p. 423.

¹⁰⁷ Quoted in Ellen Hallams (2009) p. 424.

¹⁰⁸ Ivo Daalder and James Goldgeier were more ambitious on the future of NATO. They believed that NATO's next move should be 'to open its membership to any democratic state in the world that is willing and able to contribute to the fulfilment of NATO's new responsibilities' because 'only a truly global alliance can address the global challenge of the day'. See Ivo Daalder and James Goldgeier (2006) 'Global NATO', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 85, No. 5, p. 106.

Chapter 6: NATO's Ongoing Engagement after Kosovo

6.1 Introduction

The years between the operation in Kosovo and the Libyan mission witnessed the US rethinking about its commitment to NATO, as the international security environment had changed greatly since 9/11. What mainly happened during this period was that the US intervened in Afghanistan, firstly through an *ad hoc* coalition, then under the framework of institutionalised NATO, leading to a new round of debate over the purpose of NATO. The questions remained controversial, including: why did the US and its allies invade Afghanistan? What were they after? Did they want to wage the 'War on Terror' or to help build a democratic country? Why did the Bush administration choose a coalition of the willing for combat operations but support a NATO takeover of the Afghanistan mission when reconstruction was undertaken? To put it simply, why should NATO get involved? What did NATO stand for?

Although the case of Afghanistan is important in understanding the US commitment to NATO in the post-Cold War period, it is not so representative as the case of Kosovo or Libya, which took place at two ends of the period and demonstrated the US response to two types of crises under different circumstances: Clinton faced a more severe situation than Bush; and Obama, compared with Bush, encountered new and more complicated problems such as the rigorous economic pressures. In contrast, the operation in Afghanistan, though it has lasted for more than a decade and encouraged a large number of works focusing on this war, remains difficult to assess or judge. Perhaps one of the reasons is because of the most controversial presidency of George W. Bush, who seemed to prefer unilateralism in his first term but changed to pay more attention to multilateralism in his second term. The Afghanistan mission, nonetheless, triggered as well as shed light on the rethinking about the role NATO should play as in the cases of Kosovo and Libya.

The devastating terrorist attacks of September 2001 on the US deeply shocked both Americans and Europeans. The international community felt an impetus for an immediate response, calling NATO to invoke Article Five of its charter that an attack on one member was an attack on all members. Hence the North Atlantic Council made its decision without delay on September 12, 2001 to assist with the fight against terrorism in Afghanistan, and submitted a proposal to the US, listing a set of possible military functions NATO could provide.¹ Although Washington was willing to accept an allied contribution, it was more eager to retain operational command and control for its military invasion of Afghanistan. As a result, with memories looming large of NATO's performance in the Balkans when American operational freedom and flexibility had been greatly hampered by operating through the Alliance, and with US national security at stake, the Bush administration eventually declined the offer of direct support from NATO and pursued an *ad hoc* coalition. With the objective of the Afghanistan mission changed from countering terrorism to reconstructing the country, the US recognised the importance as well as advantages of NATO, based on which the US began to assist NATO with a takeover of the Afghanistan mission. The transition, however, encountered obstacles originating from long-lasting and deep-rooted problems of the Alliance, including the non-equivalent distribution of burdens among member states. Some scholars could not wait to pronounce the failure of NATO in Afghanistan, raising the question of the viability of the Alliance.

Along with NATO's poor performance in Afghanistan, there were concerns about the rise about the new identity of NATO after 9/11. It was urgent to provide NATO with more relevance in accordance with the evolved security environment, otherwise NATO would become more and more irrelevant. After 9/11, the international community had to deal with new threats from terrorism that were shapeless and without fixed locations. With regard to this, should NATO go beyond Europe? After all the Alliance was initially designed as the prime guarantor of European security. Additionally, when taking into account how the operations both in the Balkans and in Afghanistan reflected the problem of a 'two-tiered alliance', should NATO force be applied to future conflict prevention and crisis management? Another variable leading to the change in the international security environment was the Russians, who began

¹ Gerard Baker (2002) 'NATO Is Not Dead but Missing in Action', *The Financial Times*, 21 November.

to harbour ambitions of interfering with and even preventing the transformation of NATO. Although there was a possibility in the 1990s for Russia to join NATO, the relationship between NATO and Russia became tough in the 21st century, particularly in the context of possible Georgian and Ukrainian membership of the organisation. Thus should NATO keep enlarging regardless of Russia's objections? Is the revival of Russia the reason for tying the US to Europe? In short, if the Alliance should persist, what is the purpose of NATO? What role should NATO play in the new security environment after 9/11?

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first half discusses NATO's engagement in Afghanistan, focusing on why the Bush administration decided to bypass NATO and choose an *ad hoc* coalition to implement the campaign, and why it then decided to utilise NATO to deal with reconstruction issues. It then analyses the legacy of Afghanistan, which is especially important to understand the purpose of NATO in the context of new security environment and the US withdrawal from Afghanistan. The second half of this chapter underlines the evolving concepts of NATO since the Kosovo operation. Specifically, it firstly addresses the second and third rounds of NATO enlargement and then analyses whether the US would remain committed to NATO after the Afghan mission.

6.2 NATO's engagement in Afghanistan

6.2.1 From OEF to ISAF

Debates and scepticism arose immediately after the US announced the unfolding of its large-scale operations in Afghanistan, namely Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) that would commence on October 7, 2001. The initial plan of OEF was to carry out a series of air and cruise missile strikes against key Taliban positions in Kabul, Kandahar and other Al-Qaeda bases, which was revised over the first three weeks to contain a more ambitious goal of overthrowing the Taliban regime. To many, Washington's reluctance to work with the Alliance, as well as its attitude of 'you are

with us or against us',² proved to be a damaging effect on NATO, implying a denial of the way NATO had operated over its history.³ There had been a great hope that 9/11 would present NATO with an opportunity to demonstrate both its capability and willingness to face dangers imposed by international terrorism, a mission NATO had previously identified as a key priority in its 1999 'New Strategic Concept'. But in reality, the US decision not to work through NATO left many European allies feeling deflated, making them sceptical about the future of the Alliance. Some European leaders even voiced caution over President Bush's all-out 'War on Terror', questioning whether the benefits deriving from cooperating with America in its 'War on Terror' outweighed the risks.⁴ In addition to reflecting the unilateral tendencies of the Bush administration, the US decision to bypass NATO also relegated the Alliance to the very margins of debate over whether NATO could be of any strategic utility.

Generally speaking, Washington's ignoring of NATO as well as its pursuit of 'a coalition of committed countries, if possible, but acting alone if necessary'⁵ was based on the understanding that in confronting the threat of terrorism, NATO members lacked consensus on what kind of action should be taken, though they all admitted the need for action. The US decision in autumn 2001 to undertake the war in Afghanistan with only support from a 'coalition of the willing' helped avoid the operational constraints that the Alliance might impose, which led to a quick success following the start of operations in October 2001. Thanks in part to assistance from partner countries, including the UK, France, Canada, Denmark, Norway, and Germany, the US forces in OEF were able to 'disrupt the use of Afghanistan as a terrorist base of operations, and to attack the military capability of the Taliban regime'.⁶ The military victory was further consolidated by the UN-supported Bonn Peace Agreement, according to which a UN-mandated international security force—officially named International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)—would be established to assist the Afghan Transitional Authority, an interim Afghan government, with maintaining

² President George W. Bush (2001) 'Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People', 20 September.

³ Judy Dempsey (2002) 'If Bush Does Not Make Clear that NATO Can Be Involved in Critical Issues, the Alliance Will Atrophy', *The Financial Times*, 20 November.

⁴ Robert Graham and Haig Simonian (2002) 'Chirac Cautions Washington Against Unilateral Use of Force', *The Financial Times*, 30 August.

⁵ Bob Woodward (2004) *Plan of Attack*, New York: Simon and Schuster, p. 155.

⁶ President George W. Bush (2001) 'Presidential Address to the Nation', 7 October.

security in and around Kabul.⁷ 35 UN members volunteered at six-month intervals to lead the ISAF mission, yet the short rotation soon made transferring power counterproductive. Considering that many of the countries participating in the ISAF mission were also members of NATO, the idea quickly spread that it might be more efficient if NATO could play a larger role in the ISAF mission. At the request of NATO members to expand NATO's role in Afghanistan, the Alliance ultimately claimed to firstly support Germany and the Netherlands' command of the ISAF mission on October 17, 2002. This paved the way for NATO to assume greater responsibility in Afghanistan, which dispelled the impression that NATO was becoming less viable and less important.

Looking back at these military actions of OEF that ended in March 2002 when the Operation Anaconda succeeded in assaulting on Al-Qaeda positions in the Shar-i-Kot Valley, OEF obviously achieved mixed success in its efforts to 'make it clear to the Taliban leaders and their supporters that harbouring terrorists is unacceptable and carries a price'⁸ and ultimately depose the Taliban regime. In total, about 4,000 members of the Taliban were killed, while only 56 Americans were dead and 200 wounded. Yet, there were also an estimated 1,000-1,300 Afghan civilian deaths from US bombing and over 3,000 from indirect causes,⁹ which hugely undermined the US intention to deliver a significant amount of humanitarian relief to the Afghan people. A study based on community surveys on the ground suggested even higher figures for deaths from this phase of the war, even up to 10,000, including victims of unexploded ordnances and mines.¹⁰ Although the overall number was still smaller than in the Gulf War and did not bring the war's 'success' into question, the US was acutely aware of the importance of containing these casualties within a politically acceptable level,¹¹ as OEF was accused of making Afghanistan more chaotic and less stable than

⁷ See 'Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan Pending the Re-Establishment of Permanent Government Institutions', 5 December 2001. And also see the UN Security Council Resolution 1386, 20 December 2001.

⁸ Donald Rumsfeld (2001) 'Statement of the Secretary of Defence', 7 October.

⁹ Carl Conetta (2002) 'Operation Enduring Freedom: Why a Higher Rate of Civilian Bombing Casualties', *Commonwealth Institute Project on Defense Alternative Briefing Report*, Vol. 13.

¹⁰ Aldo Benini and Lawrence Moulton (2004) 'Civilian Victims in An Asymmetrical Conflict: Operation Enduring Freedom, Afghanistan', *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 41, No. 4, pp. 403-422.

¹¹ Martin Shaw (2005) *The New Western Way of War: Risk-Transfer War and Its Crisis in Iraq*, Cambridge: Polity Press, pp. 27-28.

previously.¹² On this all-important issue, to share rather than unilaterally shoulder the burdens and risks would be a more favourable policy for the US. Another irony of the *ad hoc* coalition was that out of a coalition consisting of 69 nations, only 21 made military contributions to OEF, deploying more than 16,000 troops to the region. Of those 21 nations, 14 were NATO members. And of those non-NATO members, many provided only token support rather than direct military assistance. OEF demonstrated the inherent difficulties in maintaining a loose coalition, leading to a critical question: what did Washington gain from bypassing NATO? The Bush administration initially planned to reduce tensions between the US and European countries by keeping its prominent allies at arm's length, yet in reality resentments resurfaced during military operations. Even the usually reliable British criticised the US for its narrow focus on targeting Bin Laden at the expense of the wider, more long-term task of rebuilding Afghanistan. Although working through NATO would not eliminate all those disagreements and disputes among its members, NATO's ability to generate consensus could have provided a powerful unifying force in Afghanistan, given that the weakness of an *ad hoc* coalition was exactly the strength of NATO. In other words, the institutionalised alliance structure placed NATO at some advantage when compared with more transient coalition of the willing.¹³

6.2.2 The US commitment to NATO

Despite its allies' wish to strengthen NATO, the US was not determined to reconfirm its own commitment to the Alliance until November 2002 when the Prague Summit was held. Seven new members, including Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, were invited into the Alliance, which reinforced the relevance and capability of NATO, and more importantly, verified the US commitment to NATO as it was the US that firstly and constantly supported NATO enlargement. Additionally, the US emphasis on NATO was also reflected in its proposal to create a NATO Response Force (NRF), a 'coherent, high-readiness, joint,

¹² Carl Conetta (2002) 'Strange Victory: A Critical Appraisal of Operation Enduring Freedom and the Afghanistan War', *Commonwealth Institute Project on Defence Alternatives Research Monograph*, Vol. 06. Thomas X. Hammes (2006) *The Sling and the Stone: One War in the 21st Century*, St. Paul: Zenith Press, pp. 162-171.

¹³ Celeste Wallander (2000) 'Institutional Assets and Adaptability: NATO after the Cold War', *International Organisation*, Vol. 54, No. 4, pp. 705-735.

multinational force package' of up to 25,000 troops that was 'technologically advanced, flexible, deployable, interoperable and sustainable'.¹⁴ This motion derived from the performance in Afghanistan and urgent concerns over Iraq, which made Washington rediscover the significance of NATO so that in the long run, a consolidated, permanent NATO would enhance US security. With regard to this, concerted efforts should be made to maintain as well as strengthen the Alliance, especially to 'develop new military capabilities'¹⁵ of NATO. In addition to reconfirming the US commitment to NATO, the NRF proposal also demonstrated the US determination to repair divisions in the Alliance by underlining a new organisational structure through which members could make niche rather than proportional contributions.¹⁶ This enabled smaller countries, though possessing less state-of-the-art capabilities, to provide tailored ones to NATO's overall military strength. Viewed as a sign that Washington stayed away from unilateralism and had no intention of downgrading NATO to a mere political club that threatened to alienate those European allies, the US suggestion on the creation of the NRF was soon endorsed by the Alliance.¹⁷

Nevertheless, for some NATO allies like France, the NRF was initially suspected to be a tool for US power projection, especially when taking EU efforts to create its own rapid reaction force into account. Whether NATO's plan would conflict with, or preclude, the EU's plan became the main concern.¹⁸ In fact, the US agreed to provide assistance with the creation of a new EU force in the first place and allowed the EU to borrow 'alliance "assets" such as airborne early-warning stations or US satellite data to help European commanders confront a crisis', on the premise that the entire European military forces would be included in the NRF to ensure the role of NATO as the prime guarantor of European security.¹⁹ The Prague Summit and the NRF proposal together provided a chance for Washington to repair cleavages among NATO allies by reconfirming its commitment to the Alliance. The shift in US attitudes towards NATO, from undervalued to appreciated, was based on the

¹⁴ 'The NATO Response Force: At the Centre of NATO Transformation'.

¹⁵ President George W. Bush (2002) 'President Bush Previews Historic NATO Summit in Prague Speech: Remarks by the President to Prague Atlantic Student Summit', 20 November.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Judy Dempsey (2002).

¹⁸ Ian Mather (2002) 'West Outgrows NATO Paper Tiger', *The Scotsman*, 24 November.

¹⁹ Joseph Fitchett (2002) 'NATO Agrees to Help New EU Force', *The New York Times*, 16 December.

understanding that an *ad hoc* coalition would not be able to replace NATO but would eventually decrease NATO's effectiveness.²⁰ NATO, though sometimes inefficient in achieving operational freedom and flexibility and lacking precision military capabilities on the part of the European members, remained the best option for the US to deal with conflicts, because throughout the history of NATO, 'despite hand-wringing and debate, despite name-calling and "op-ed" diplomacy, despite sometimes genuine differences over policy and strategy, when it came time for action, NATO would act as one'.²¹

Although NATO had shouldered political responsibility for operations in Afghanistan since 2002, it did not achieve a substantial military presence there until August 2003 when NATO assumed the overall control of ISAF indefinitely. This 'groundbreaking operation'²² represented a landmark in NATO's over 50-year history, as it was the first time for NATO to conduct an operation outside Europe. According to General Sir Jack Deverell, the ISAF's operational commander, the decision for NATO to take a leadership role in ISAF also demonstrated 'a real break from the NATO of the past to an Alliance which is more relevant and has greater utility in the uncertain security environment of the future'.²³ Pragmatically, a greater role for NATO in Afghanistan would guarantee more security and stability than the existing ISAF mission could provide the country with, regarding that no actor was more experienced than NATO in accomplishing military missions. On October 13, 2003, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1510, officially authorising expansion of NATO's role outside the vicinity of Kabul.²⁴ By summer 2006, NATO's role had expanded to include western and southern Afghanistan in addition to the capital and the northern areas of the country. Although the plan went smoothly for NATO to assume responsibility for the entire country, the highly unstable eastern part of the country was still beyond NATO's reach. The completion of this last step actually depended on whether NATO and US forces could coordinate the operation in that area; after all it was the US that deployed a significant number of ground forces and provided sufficient air support

²⁰ Thomas E. Ricks (2003) 'NATO Allies Trade Barbs Over Iraq; Rumsfeld: Critics Are Understanding Alliance's Strength', *The Washington Post*, 9 February.

²¹ Andrew R. Hoehn and Sarah Harting (2010) *Risking NATO: Testing the Limits of the Alliance in Afghanistan*, Santa Monica: RAND, p. 23.

²² 'NATO Takes on Afghanistan Mission', 11 August 2003.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ UN Security Council Resolution 1510, 13 October 2003.

and various intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance assets to the eastern areas. The final deal was made during the autumn of 2006 when the Alliance took responsibility for all of Afghanistan, but with sensitive counterterrorist tasks remaining under US command.²⁵ The US eagerness to assist NATO was crucial to guarantee the Alliance a quicker takeover of the ISAF mission, as without US support, it would have taken longer for NATO to claim strategic control of ISAF as well as to achieve a safer and more secure environment.

Another reason why Washington changed its stance from marginalising NATO to a strategy centred on *ad hoc* coalition to facilitating the Alliance to endorse a stabilisation and peacekeeping role was because of the demand of the Afghan people, not just the government, who welcomed an expanded role for NATO in Afghanistan. Although the aim of keeping NATO involved was to make Afghanistan competent at all levels of governance rather than relying on ISAF for security, 'Afghanistan recognises that at present it is unable to fully meet its own security needs and highly appreciates NATO's contribution to providing security and stability in Afghanistan'.²⁶ With respect to this, the US continued to assist the Afghan people in reconstruction and development on one hand, and promoted the growth of the Afghan National Security Force (ANSF) through the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan (NTM-A) on the other. However, after two years of training, Afghan forces remained heavily dependent on support from the US and the coalition while requiring more resources to aid the training mission.²⁷ There were signs that this excessive bundle was increasing because the US had focused too narrowly on battlefield gains once war commenced, ignoring any post-war strategy for stabilisation and reconstruction of Afghanistan.²⁸ Prior to the summer of 2003, focus on the success of the campaign was so obvious that no attention was paid to 'nation-building lite'.²⁹ The Bush administration was so ill-prepared that it could hardly meet the challenges posed by an Afghan society in disarray. One of the reasons why Washington devoted inadequate funds to rebuilding in Afghanistan was that by late 2002, it was busy diverting resources to sponsor

²⁵ Andrew R. Hoehn and Sarah Harting (2010) p. 29.

²⁶ 'Declaration by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan', 6 September 2006.

²⁷ Luke Baker and Andrew Quinn, 'NATO Allies Offer 7,000 Extra Troops for Afghan War', *Reuters*, 04 December 2009.

²⁸ Carl Conetta (2002) 'Strange Victory'.

²⁹ Michael Ignatieff (2002) 'Nation-Building Lite', *The New York Times*, 28 July.

military operations in Iraq. After noticing the emergency of adding money to secure the success of this out-of-area mission, the Bush administration carved out \$1 billion to double its support for the Karzai government, along with the \$87 billion for Iraq, which, in the short term, partially eased the pressure posed by reconstruction requirements.³⁰

6.2.3 US strategy for Afghanistan revisited

Even though the US remained the largest external donor to Afghanistan, 'its levels of foreign assistance were still lower than any other foreign assistance contributions the US had made, with the exception of US assistance to Japan and UN missions in the Congo, Cambodia and Sierra Leone'.³¹ As a result, with Washington distracted by counter-insurgency operations in both Afghanistan and Iraq on one hand, and with no mature Afghan security forces formed on the other, NATO maintained a steady presence in the country to counter resurgent Taliban forces. From the perspective of the US, while it was uncertain that working through NATO would produce a more efficient strategy, it was at least an opportunity to achieve a different outcome, especially when taking into account the fact that NATO had undertaken collective military actions against Bosnia and Kosovo that enriched NATO with relevant and unmatched experience in how to stabilize a chaotic situation.

The belated US recognition that NATO needed in Afghanistan was, however, influenced and even undermined by its original decision to bypass NATO that helped create a great reluctance on some member states later on to make relevant contributions. Considering that the Alliance had played no collective role in combat operations in Afghanistan, the US found it increasingly difficult to persuade NATO allies to devote necessary resources and funds to the subsequent ISAF mission. This problem inherent in operations through NATO became thornier when forces were insufficiently generated for Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) to spread out over Afghanistan following the UN authorisation of an expansion of ISAF in October 2003. The main problem confronting NATO was the lack of individual national contributions, slowing down the implementation of the complex and challenging tasks

³⁰ Thomas X. Hammes (2006) p. 168.

³¹ Ellen Hallams (2010) *The United States and NATO since 9/11: the Transatlantic Alliance Renewed*, London: Routledge, p. 74.

of rebuilding and stabilisation. As the ISAF mission expanded beyond Kabul, some members, including the US, Britain, the Netherlands and Canada, were willing to operate in the more dangerous southern Afghanistan, while others like Germany were reluctant to move beyond the more stable northern and western parts of the country. The tragedy of having to face a two-tiered alliance in reality again implied that if Washington had engaged the more institutionalised NATO instead of an *ad hoc* coalition earlier on, it would find it easier to gather support for the task or 'at least (be) able to have a debate with the allies involved'.³² Despite the fact that an *ad hoc* coalition offered the US greater operational freedom and flexibility, it caused growing tensions between the US and other NATO allies. Moreover, when key members of the Afghanistan coalition claimed to withdraw their support for the intervention in Iraq, the weakness of working through a coalition of the willing became unprecedentedly intolerable. Any member could opt in and opt out because it acted without the binding institutional structures of an alliance like NATO. Hence the indication became apparent that NATO would be a better choice than an *ad hoc* coalition when it came to generating resources for those missions for which Washington sought help.

For American troops in Afghanistan, the acronym of ISAF was parodied as 'I Saw Americans Fight'. This reflected more resentments arising among allies as 'the United States—along with just a handful of other countries—do the bulk of the heavy fighting, while a number of other ISAF detachments are limited by their own governments' combat restrictions'.³³ Then Secretary of Defence Robert Gates spoke out in frustration at a conference of army leaders from 38 European nations in Germany, that if NATO could not 'summon the will to get the job done in a mission that we agree is morally just and vital to our security', then 'the worth of the mission and the utility of the 60-year-old trans-Atlantic security project' would be questioned.³⁴ His remarks not only pointed out 'a genuine paradox surrounding NATO's role in Afghanistan: NATO might ultimately succeed in Afghanistan but fail as an alliance', but also suggested that unless NATO succeed in the Afghanistan

³² Ellen Hallams interview with Colonel Ludwig Decamps in Ellen Hallams (2010) p. 77.

³³ Anna Mulrine (2008) 'In Afghanistan, the NATO-led Force is 'Underresourced' for the Fight Against the Taliban', *US News*, 5 June.

³⁴ 'Afghanistan: Gates Doubts Europeans' War Commitment', *The New York Times*, 26 October 2007.

mission could the Americans recognise NATO as a viable instrument, otherwise the US might go back to the coalition idea.³⁵

Given the turmoil in the Alliance during the past decade, Afghanistan provided an opportunity to show that NATO was still capable of doing something, yet in reality it revealed inherent problems of the Alliance more profoundly. In terms of troop contributions, the burdens have not been shared equitably. Most of the responsibilities have been shouldered by a few key members, especially by the US. Actually the debate over troop commitments became more acute in late 2007 and early 2008. Considering that the ISAF in total only reached 33,000 troops in February 2007, General John Craddock, NATO's Supreme Allied Commander at the time, pleaded in public for more contributions from member states to guarantee 'significant difference in progress', but with little success.³⁶ Soon after, General David McKiernan, commander of US Force Afghanistan (USFOR-A), also expressed his concerns about this 'under-resourced war' that needed 'more manoeuvre units...more flying machines...more intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance apparatus'.³⁷ By late 2008, the tone of the debate had changed because of the resurgent Taliban threat. A consensus was achieved within the Alliance that Afghanistan was thirsty for troops and that more personnel should be deployed by all member states.

6.2.4 A larger NATO-led ISAF

In 2009 and 2010 Taliban attacks intensified greatly, making the situation facing NATO more challenging. In addition to the resurgent Taliban, major concerns also included the lagging reconstruction process; the time-consuming training of the Afghan army, and erosive corruption within the Afghan government. Indeed, the weakness of Afghan President Hamid Karzai and the internal corruption complicated what was already a daunting task. Although NATO has been committed to provide as well as improve security for the Afghan people, its confidence in passing this

³⁵ Andrew R. Hoehn and Sarah Harting (2010) p. 41.

³⁶ Al Pessin (2008) 'NATO Commander Says More Troops Needed in Afghanistan', *Voice of America*, 10 February.

³⁷ 'More NATO Troops Needed in Afghanistan, Says Outgoing Chief', *The Telegraph*, 3 June 2008.

‘important test of NATO’s out-of-area capability’³⁸ was slightly reduced when taking into account the fact that troops were still inadequately generated for the mission. Robert Gates reemphasised the tough situation in Afghanistan at the 44th Munich Conference on Security Policy, saying that there were not enough troops to allow the Alliance to make progress in all parts of the country. The reason for achieving a larger NATO-led ISAF was, according to Gates, ‘to accelerate our progress and lock in our gains, and to make them permanent’.³⁹ Yet, having received few positive responses from NATO allies for further contributions, the US decided to take the lead to send additional troops to Afghanistan as a reply to the appeal for a reassertion of US leadership. From the perspective of Washington, Al-Qaeda still retained its ‘safe havens’ along the border, making the status quo of Afghanistan unsustainable. At the meeting of NATO Defence Ministers in February 2009, President Obama announced the deployment of an additional 17,000 US troops, marking the beginning of the Americanisation of the war in Afghanistan. By issuing this order, nearly 50% would be added to the 36,000 American troops already there.⁴⁰ One month later, President Obama promised to deploy approximately 4,000 troops to train Afghan security forces for the purpose of having every American unit in Afghanistan partnered with an Afghan unit, which ‘for the first time...will truly resource our effort to and support the Afghan army and police’. Moreover, he also set a goal of building an Afghan army of 134,000 and a police force of 82,000 by 2011.⁴¹

US efforts culminated in December 2009 when President Obama further authorised an additional 30,000 troops to support the Afghanistan mission by the summer 2010. The decision was actually a reply to the report put forward in September by General Stanley McChrystal, the top military commander in Afghanistan, that unless significantly more troops were sent, the war in Afghanistan was likely to result in failure.⁴² The fact that ‘for several years (Afghanistan) has moved backwards’ and

³⁸ Vincent Morelli and Paul Belkin (2009) ‘NATO in Afghanistan: A Test of the Transatlantic Alliance’, *CRS Report for Congress*.

³⁹ Jim Garamone (2008) ‘More NATO Troops Needed in Afghanistan, Gates Says’, *American Forces Press Service*, 9 February.

⁴⁰ Helene Cooper (2009) ‘Putting Stamp on Afghan War, Obama Will Send 17,000 Troops’, *The New York Times*, 17 February.

⁴¹ President Obama (2009) ‘Remarks by the President on A New Strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan’, 27 March.

⁴² Eric Schmitt (2009) ‘General Calls for More US Troops to Afghanistan to Avoid Afghan Failure’, *The New York Times*, 20 September.

that ‘(the US) security (was) at stake’ finally convinced Obama to send more troops.⁴³ As a crucial step to ‘seize the initiative’, this deployment was expected to build the Afghan capacity that could ‘allow for a responsible transition of our forces out of Afghanistan’ after 18 months.⁴⁴ Driven by US determination, visible changes had taken place even in these few months. The total number of ISAF personnel increased from 56,420 in February to 71,030 in October 2009.⁴⁵

The year of 2010 witnessed the number of troop contributions to ISAF soaring to 119,745.⁴⁶ By June 2011, ISAF further expanded to 132,457.⁴⁷ Even though a larger ISAF provided more guarantee for the success of the mission, it did not solve the puzzle that ‘NATO might ultimately succeed in Afghanistan but fail as an alliance’ because most contributions were still made by Washington only. For example, US force contributions to ISAF were 34,800 as of October 2009, equivalent to nearly half of total ISAF forces.⁴⁸ This number rose to 78,430 in July 2010, which doubled the amount of European forces and accounted for two-thirds of the total troop contributions to ISAF.⁴⁹ The proportion became more astonishing in 2011 when US forces supporting ISAF increased to 90,000, accounting for 10 times more troops than any other country.⁵⁰ In general, during the two years from mid-2009 till mid-2011, the US increased its forces committed to Afghanistan by 67%. On the other hand, some NATO members, including The Netherlands, Belgium, Norway, Iceland, actually shrank their existing contributions.

Although the feeling that NATO had been starved of resources since the first day in Afghanistan is not at all new in the history of NATO debates, necessary responses from member states were unusually delayed to ensure the victory of the Alliance as a whole. One of the reasons Washington found it hard to generate forces it wanted from

⁴³ Bob Woodward (2010) *Obama's Wars*, New York: Simon and Schuster p. 334.

⁴⁴ President Obama (2009) ‘Remarks by the President in Address to the Nation on the Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan’, 1 December.

⁴⁵ For troop contributions to ISAF as of February 13, 2009, see ‘Afghanistan Report 2009’. For troop contributions to ISAF as of October 22, 2009, see Steve Bowman and Catherine Dale (2009) ‘War in Afghanistan: Strategy, Military Operations, and Issues for Congress’, *CRS Report for Congress*, p. 15.

⁴⁶ ‘International Security Assistance Force (ISAF): Key Facts and Figures’, 7 July 2010.

⁴⁷ ‘Afghanistan Midyear Report 2011: Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict’, July 2011.

⁴⁸ Steve Bowman and Catherine Dale (2009) ‘War in Afghanistan: Strategy, Military Operations, and Issues for Congress’, *CRS Report for Congress*, p. 15.

⁴⁹ ‘International Security Assistance Force (ISAF): Key Facts and Figures’.

⁵⁰ ‘Afghanistan Midyear Report 2011: Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict’.

European allies was because declining European public support for the US leadership had restricted European governments from providing resources for the NATO-led ISAF mission. This obstacle was not easy to overcome, as the accusation that the US was using NATO as an instrument of unilateral power had been so widespread among European countries that it often surfaced whenever disputes between the US and European allies escalated. The deep-rooted disharmony became even more prominent in the case of Afghanistan due to the fact that two wars were going on at the same time. Robert Gates once explained why Europeans were reluctant to support operations in Afghanistan by arguing that they could not separate the fights in Iraq and Afghanistan appropriately. According to him, 'Europeans who are opposed to what the United States has been doing in Iraq, have projected that to the operation in Afghanistan. So there probably has been some spillover in that respect.'⁵¹ Despite the reminder Gates sent to European countries that 'there is a direct threat to Europe out of (Afghanistan)', the US also fully understood the difficulties in eliminating constraints that the public had placed on the political leaders of Europe. As a result, in early 2009, the US shifted its strategy, the idea behind which was similar to the NRF proposal: instead of repeating what European countries should do, Washington began to require European allies to focus on what they *could* do. By recognising as well as utilising the different capabilities and expertise individual member states *could* bring to NATO operations, not only Afghanistan's long-term stability but also the rationale of NATO's persistence were secured.

6.2.5 The US exit from Afghanistan

On March 2, 2011, the US launched a targeted operation against a compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan, which successfully killed Osama bin Laden, the Al-Qaeda leader and symbol. According to the President, 'the death of bin Laden marks the most significant achievement to date in our nation's effort to defeat Al-Qaeda'.⁵² Asserting that 'Al-Qaeda is under more pressure than at any time since 9/11', President Obama stated that 'the tide of war is receding'.⁵³ Thus he announced a

⁵¹ Jim Garamone (2008) 'More NATO Troops Needed in Afghanistan, Gates Says', *American Forces Press Service*, 9 February.

⁵² President Obama (2011) 'Remarks by the President on Osama Bin Laden', 2 May.

⁵³ President Obama (2011) 'Remarks by the President on the Way Forward in Afghanistan', 22 June.

withdrawal of 10,000 US troops from Afghanistan by the end of 2011. After confirming that the US had already achieved preset objectives, including 'to refocus on Al-Qaeda, to reverse the Taliban's momentum, and train Afghan security forces to defend their own country', the President further aimed to bring home a total of 33,000 troops by next summer 'as the Phase 2 drawdown'.⁵⁴ According to General John Allen, commander of ISAF, the announced drawdown would bring 23,000 of the 88,000 US troops currently in Afghanistan back home by September 30, 2012. But ISAF by then would still have 65,000 US troops in addition to about 40,000 troops from other nations like Britain, Germany and Canada.⁵⁵

Actually, the decision to transfer lead security responsibility and reduce US forces in Afghanistan was made as early as December 2009 when Obama promised to withdraw troops in July 2011 while ordering an additional 30,000 American troops into Afghanistan.⁵⁶ Although most news coverage focused on the 30,000 troops in Obama's 33-minute West Point speech, the headline in the *New York Times* was: 'Obama Adds Troops, but Maps Exit Plan'.⁵⁷ Ever since then, debates have continued over whether and how the US should exit from Afghanistan. Critics argued that 'Obama's decision to bring troops home from Afghanistan faster than the military recommended could jeopardise the next major push of the war, to unseat insurgents in the east'.⁵⁸ They mainly opposed identifying a time frame for the US to transfer responsibility to the Afghans and called for an open-ended escalation of the US effort for the nation-building project. President Obama rejected this course publicly because 'it sets goals that are beyond what can be achieved at a reasonable cost, and what we need to achieve to secure our interests'.⁵⁹ The Afghanistan mission was redefined as neither 'a full-blown counterinsurgency' nor 'an open-ended...unrealistic nation-building endeavour',⁶⁰ so it must be clear that...America had no intention in fighting

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Larry Shaughnessy (2012) 'Allen: US Troops Drawdown from Afghanistan to Begin 'Very Shortly'', *CNN*, 23 May.

⁵⁶ President Obama (2009) 'Remarks by the President in Address to the Nation on the Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan', 1 December.

⁵⁷ Sheryl Gay Stolberg and Helene Cooper (2009) 'Obama Adds Troops, but Maps Exit Plan', *The New York Times*, 1 December.

⁵⁸ Michelle Nichols (2011) 'US Drawdown Begins in Afghanistan', *Reuters*, 15 July.

⁵⁹ President Obama (2009) 'Remarks by the President in Address to the Nation on the Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan'.

⁶⁰ Bob Woodward (2010) p. 325.

an endless war in Afghanistan'.⁶¹ Most importantly, in the wake of an economic crisis, the price of the wars could not be simply ignored. Rahm Emanuel, the White House Chief of Staff, who privately called the war in Afghanistan 'political flypaper' ('you get stuck to it and you cannot get unstuck'), worried about the cost when Obama announced the deployment of another 30,000 troops.⁶² Representative Louise Slaughter (D-NY) even calculated that 'the US government is already spending \$3.6 billion a month on the war in Afghanistan. Sending an additional 30,000 troops will cost an extra \$30 billion a year, which works out to roughly \$1 million per soldier or Marine'.⁶³ In the meantime, according to Senator Bernie Sanders (I-Vt), '17 percent of our people are unemployed or under-employed and one out of four kids is on food stamps'.⁶⁴ In short, the US has failed to achieve the balance between national security and economy, resulting in the reduction of US forces abroad as a means to regain the balance.

The Republicans, however, questioned the commitment to a timetable for bringing US troops home. Representative Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn) was concerned that the administration paid more attention to an 'exit strategy' than a success strategy. Senator John Cornyn (R-Tex) shared the same view, believing that it was a mistake to set a drawdown date before the surge began because it would 'send a mixed message to both our friends and our enemies regarding the US long-term commitment to success'.⁶⁵ Even the moderate Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC), was troubled by Obama's July 2011 deadline to start leaving, as the rationale for why the deadline existed would make it difficult for the President to get Republican support.⁶⁶ What was worse, it would be a signal to the enemy that an additional 30,000 US forces were not a big deal because they were going back home soon.

Those concerns were reasonable, as assassinations by the Taliban went up in early 2010. 'The enemy is just beginning to adapt', Derek Harvey, the director of CentCom's Afghanistan-Pakistan Centre of Excellence, said. According to him, one

⁶¹ President Obama (2009), 'Remarks by the President in Address to the Nation on the Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan'.

⁶² Bob Woodward (2010) p. 327.

⁶³ 'Lawmakers React to Afghan Strategy', *The Washington Post*.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Bob Woodward (2010) pp. 335-336.

harsh reality was that the Taliban leadership thought they were okay, even with the surge of 30,000 more US troops.⁶⁷ Skepticism arose about the viability of counterinsurgency. Richard Holbrooke, the US Special Envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan, worried openly about whether the Afghans were ready to assume security responsibility by July 2011 when the US troops would leave. General Douglas Lute, Deputy National Security Adviser, was also concerned about when the US would move to the last phase of Obama's 'clear, hold, build and transfer' model.⁶⁸ To ensure the withdrawal strategy would be sustainable with the Congress and his fellows, Obama agreed to conduct the first reassessment in December 2010 to reach a conclusion about the pace of withdrawing forces the next year. The result of the assessment would determine not whether but how the US should draw down.⁶⁹ Apparently the President has stuck to his decision to draw down US forces, yet he also understood the importance of securing the interpretation of US strategy not as 'leaving Afghanistan prematurely'. Therefore, General David Petraeus, who was successful in bringing an uneasy peace to Iraq following the 2007 surge of US troops under his command and would have to work off the war plan McChrystal devised for Afghanistan, further clarified that the President's West Point speech did not mean the US would 'race for the exits' in 2011—'It's not hands off, it's thin out'.⁷⁰

The withdrawal decision came amid intense fighting in Afghanistan. Violence actually increased across the country following the killing of Osama bin Laden in Pakistan on May 2, 2011, resulting in the so-called Taliban's 'spring offensive'. What was worse, just a week after the withdrawal was declared, three bombers blew themselves up at the Kabul Intercontinental Hotel, killing at least seven people and raising questions about whether Afghan forces were fully prepared to assume responsibilities as US forces pulled out.⁷¹ But for the US, to announce the drawdown seemed to be a task that brooked no delay. Washington expected Afghan security forces to take over security responsibilities from foreign forces in seven areas of the country in the summer of 2011 and to take the lead in protecting the entire country by

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 348.

⁶⁸ Ibid., pp. 353, 358-359.

⁶⁹ Bob Woodward (2010) p. 329.

⁷⁰ Mark Thompson (2010) 'Petraeus Hearings: Easy Confirmation, Difficult Task', *Time*, 29 June. Bob Woodward (2010) p. 349.

⁷¹ 'Kabul's Intercontinental Hotel Attacked by Gunmen', *BBC News*, June 29 2011.

the end of 2014. One of the explanations was that by May 2012 nearly 2,000 US forces had been killed and 16,253 wounded, imposing huge pressures on the Obama administration.⁷² Many of Obama's fellow Democrats have long been skeptical about the Afghanistan commitment, requesting a quick pullout. For them, it was highly controversial whether the war in Afghanistan was necessary for the war against terrorism to be a success.⁷³ Vice President Joe Biden, who initially argued that Afghanistan would gain little measurable benefit from the build-up of 30,000 troops as long as there was a lack of a credible Afghan government and Afghan security services, warned Obama that the military rationale for adding more troops to a backsliding war in Afghanistan was flawed.⁷⁴ He soon became pessimistic and more convinced than ever that Afghanistan was a version of Vietnam. Republicans themselves were divided. Some, including then-presidential candidate Mitt Romney, criticised Obama for setting a withdrawal date in the first place, for it would leave little room for future adjustments of US strategy. Yet a plurality thought the US should withdraw earlier than the end of 2014. After a series of violent episodes and setbacks, however, support for the war dropped sharply among both Democrats and Republicans. According to a New York Times/CBS News poll conducted in March 2012, 69% of those polled believed that the war in Afghanistan had not been worth the fighting.⁷⁵ In a Pew Research Centre poll, 57% of respondents said that America should bring home US troops as soon as possible, while 50% in a Gallup/USA Today poll said America should speed up the withdrawal from Afghanistan.⁷⁶

This domestic debate was complicated by the strain between the US and Afghanistan, especially after the burning of Qurans at a US military base, which led to the deaths of several Afghan civilians. Hundreds of demonstrators yelled 'Die, die foreigners' and required US forces to leave their country.⁷⁷ In fact, for many Afghan people, US

⁷² Operation Enduring Freedom, iCasualties.

⁷³ 'A Sceptical View of Afghanistan', *The Washington Post*, 16 September 2009.

⁷⁴ Anne Gearan (2012) 'Joe Biden, In Leaked Memo, Told Obama Afghanistan Plan Flawed', *Huff Post*, 25 June.

⁷⁵ Elisabeth Bumiller and Allison Kopicki (2012) 'Support in US for Afghan War Drops Sharply, Poll Finds', *The New York Times*, 26 March.

⁷⁶ 'Little Support for US Intervention in Syrian Conflict, Foreign Policy Views: Afghanistan, Iran, Israel', *PewResearch*, 15 March 2012. Jeffrey M. Jones (2012) 'In US, Half Say US Should Speed up Afghanistan Withdrawal', *Gallup Politics*, 15 March 2012.

⁷⁷ Aleem Agha and Nick Achifrin (2012) 'Koran Burning at US Base Sparks Afghan Protest', *ABC News*, 21 February 2012.

forces have been perceived as being imperial police for a long time.⁷⁸ This incident merely triggered the doubt about whether Americans respect Islam as well as deep frustration about why violence remained widespread after having overthrown the Taliban for more than 10 years. In response, Present Obama reemphasised that the US had no intention to police Afghan streets or patrol Afghan mountains indefinitely, as making Afghanistan a secured place was the responsibility of the Afghan government. Further, he clarified the goal that the US could and would seek was to 'build a partnership with the Afghan people that endures—one that ensures that we will be able to continue targeting terrorists and supporting a sovereign Afghan government'.⁷⁹ However, tensions between Washington and Kabul were accelerated in the following year due to the release of photos showing US soldiers posing with the remains of Taliban insurgents and a US staff sergeant who had been charged in the killing of 16 Afghan civilians.⁸⁰ In order to improve the already difficult relationship with Afghanistan, President Obama signed a strategic partnership agreement with President Hamid Karzai on the first anniversary of Osama bin Laden's death, heralding 'a future in which war ends, and a new chapter begins'.⁸¹ According to Obama, this 'Enduring Strategic Partnership Agreement' would provide the long-term framework for the US-Afghanistan relationship after the drawdown of US forces: the US 'will shift into a support role as Afghans step forward'. US eagerness to leave was nonetheless criticised by some of the Afghans and even the international community, for the Taliban never stopped creating chaos. Just hours after the agreement was signed, at least two explosions shook the Afghan capital, near a compound used by UN workers and other foreigners, killing seven people, including six civilians and a security guard.⁸² This again raised the question of whether Afghan forces were ready to shoulder security responsibilities for the entire country and whether it was too early for the US to transfer the counterinsurgency mission and withdraw its forces from Afghanistan.

⁷⁸ Thomas X. Hammes (2006) p. 165.

⁷⁹ President Obama (2011) 'Remarks by the President on the Way Forward in Afghanistan'.

⁸⁰ David Zucchino (2012) 'US Troops Posed with Body Parts of Afghan Bombers', *The Los Angeles Times*, 18 April. Mark Landler (2012) 'Obama Signs Pact in Kabul, Turning Page in Afghan War', *The New York Times*, 01 May 2012. 'US Soldier Charged with Killing 16 Afghan Civilians to Plea Guilty to Avoid Death Penalty', *The Telegraph*, 29 May 2013.

⁸¹ President Obama (2012) 'Remarks by President Obama in Address to the Nation from Afghanistan'. President Obama (2012) 'Remarks by President Obama and President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan at Signing of Strategic Partnership Agreement', 2 May.

⁸² Mark Landler (2012).

As a result, although President Obama stated on September 1, 2012 that he had a 'specific plan to bring our troops from Afghanistan by the end of 2014', he did not set a date for the drawdown of all US troops from the country. White House press secretary Jay Carney even clarified that the President actually had 'never said that all the troops would be out'.⁸³ To further reduce the Afghans' concerns about having to deal with threats alone after the withdrawal and to dispel the rumours that America was going to abandon Afghanistan, the US encouraged ISAF and other partners to boost the training of Afghan forces and police. According to General John Allen, commander of ISAF, the Afghanistan army and police have been growing rapidly from 276,000 to 340,000, some of whom were highly-trained.⁸⁴ The number went even higher in 2013, amounting to more than 350,000.⁸⁵ At the same time, the UN Security Council unanimously agreed to extend the authorisation of ISAF for another 12 months ending October 13, 2013, considering the Taliban had escalated attacks recently as they tried to take advantage of the withdrawal of foreign troops.⁸⁶ In June 2013, Afghan forces ultimately took the lead for security nationwide, leaving the NATO-led ISAF entirely in a supporting, backseat role. So far the total of ISAF forces has dropped from 130,000 to just over 87,200, and about 60,000 US troops went home.⁸⁷

It seemed that the growing capability of the Afghan security forces would allow foreign troops to leave the country, yet 'a future without the most of the 86,000 NATO and American troops currently in the country looks uncertain'.⁸⁸ The fear of uncertainty spread out as Umer Daudzai, Afghanistan's Interior Minister, revealed that more than 1,700 Afghan police officers had been killed since March 2013. The same number died in the preceding 12 months.⁸⁹ With regard to the rising death toll among Afghan forces as NATO withdrew, the Security Council then made a decision

⁸³ Meghashyam Mali (2012) 'Carney: No Obama Plan to Withdraw All US Troops from Afghanistan by 2014', *The Hill*, 3 September.

⁸⁴ Larry Shaughnessy (2012) 'Allen: US Troop Drawdown from Afghanistan to Begin 'Very Shortly'', *CNN*, 23 May.

⁸⁵ 'UN Extends NATO Forces in Afghanistan for Last Time', *NDTV*, 11 October 2013.

⁸⁶ UN Security Council Resolution 2011, 12 October 2011. UN Security Council Resolution 2069, 9 October 2012.

⁸⁷ 'UN Extends NATO Forces in Afghanistan for Last Time'.

⁸⁸ Waj Khan (2013) 'US Withdrawal Means Afghans Celebrate Eid with Smaller, Cheaper, Animals', *NBC News*, 17 October.

⁸⁹ John Smith (2013) 'No Plans for Complete Withdrawal from Afghanistan, ISAF General Says', *Stars and Stripes*, 3 September.

to extend ISAF's mandate until December 31, 2014, the final day for transferring full security responsibility to the Afghan government.⁹⁰ There remained little discussion about whether or when the coalition would completely withdraw, though civilian deaths had dropped 12%, suggesting conditions in Afghanistan were improving steadily.⁹¹ In addressing the US role after 2014, Washington expressed its wish to normalise the relationship between America and Afghanistan, rather than purposely influencing or abandoning it. By reiterating that it was too soon to make decisions about the number of forces that could remain in Afghanistan after 2014, the US refrained from sinking into the endless debate over what role America should play in Afghanistan.⁹² But the rhetoric, without doubt, brought more suspicions and resentments. As a result, in January 2014, the Pentagon proposed keeping a 10,000-strong training and support force in Afghanistan after the end of 2014 for two years, and then would start drawing the force down to nearly zero by the end of President Obama's term.⁹³ That is a much shorter period than earlier estimates. Although it would allow Obama to claim on leaving office that he had brought two wars to an end, it also leads to an urgent requirement to reassess the overall US decision-making on the Afghanistan operation.

6.2.6 The legacy of Afghanistan

It is hard to draw a conclusion about the entire Afghanistan mission especially because it was clearly divided into two phases: combat and reconstruction. Bearing in mind the lessons from Bosnia and Kosovo, the Bush administration announced the bypassing of NATO and chose an *ad hoc* coalition, in order to avoid the frustrating challenge of conducting 'war by committee'. What the Balkans suggested to President Bush was that US actions were always constrained by having to generate consensus amongst 18 other nations, which prevented the US from retaining full operational control. Hence no matter how eager the other NATO members were to provide help to America after 9/11, the administration rejected invoking Article Five of the NATO

⁹⁰ UN Security Council Resolution 2020, 10 October 2013.

⁹¹ 'Afghan Civilian Deaths Drop but Attacks on Women, Children and Political Targets Rise—UN', *UN News Centre*, 19 February 2013.

⁹² 'Fact Sheet: Afghanistan', 12 February 2013.

⁹³ Adam Entous and Julian Barnes (2014) 'US Military Proposal Seeks Shorter Afghan Stay', *The Wall Street Journal*, 21 January.

charter. For President Bush, working through a coalition of the willing was a decision made after thoughtful considerations. Yet given that during the combat, a majority of operations were undertaken by the US, it was not unreasonable to question whether OEF was really a true coalition effort or an American unilateral operation. Members of the *ad hoc* coalition were asked to offer assistance voluntarily, meaning there was no binding on any of them, including the US itself. Therefore the US could conduct the operation in a way it preferred, regardless of opinions or advices from its allies. Indeed, the coalition it generated following 9/11 provided the US with more operational freedom and flexibility than NATO, but OEF was not that different from NATO's interventions in the Balkans, because it was the US and some NATO allies of the coalition that contributed most of the military resources and capabilities to the Afghanistan mission. The campaign in fact represented essentially an effort made by the US together with key NATO allies. Thus what did America truly gain from bypassing NATO?

Although the Bush administration successfully refrained from 'tying its hands', it failed to properly engage its allies, many of whom felt deflated and even abandoned. The tensions between the US and its allies did not become an obstacle until reconstruction was put on the agenda. Since every member had a right to join and quit the *ad hoc* coalition, it became increasingly difficult for the US to generate resources and personnel from its allies for the rebuilding task. This mission actually reflected the inherent problems in maintaining loose coalition in the absence of any institutional structures. In contrast, NATO, when facing disagreements and disputes, could always hold its members together and present a united front, in order to guarantee that 'the pull of alliance unity was stronger than the forces threatening to pull NATO apart'.⁹⁴ As a double-edged sword, the institutional structure of NATO endowed its member states with incomparable power, though simultaneously placed certain constraints on employing that power. After recognizing the advantage of NATO over a coalition of the willing, the administration handed over the Afghanistan mission to NATO, reconfirming US commitments to the Alliance.

⁹⁴ Ellen Hallams (2010) p. 73.

As the rising of Taliban insurgents became severe, ISAF was required to expand. However, NATO members were not well prepared to share the burdens, creating a two-tiered alliance with the US and some key NATO allies offering most troops and the other members committing fewer resources. This time, instead of criticising its allies for being unwilling or unable to contribute, the US encouraged NATO members to focus on what they *could* do, which helped NATO utilise the different capabilities and expertise of individual member state. Although the solution to the two-tiered alliance was not ideal, it at least provided the US with an idea of how to stimulate its allies to participate in NATO operations as well as how to 'make better use of' the Alliance, and strengthened US commitments to NATO. In short, if the lessons of the Balkans reduced US confidence in exploiting NATO, then the legacy of Afghanistan reinforced US faith in the Alliance.

6.3 Evolving concepts

In many important respects, the transformation of NATO has gone smoothly since it was firstly put on the agenda at the Rome Summit in 1991. 10 years later, President Bush further outlined a broad vision of a new security community, emphasising his belief in 'NATO membership for all of Europe's democracies that seek it and are ready to share the responsibilities that NATO brings'.⁹⁵ However, in the direct aftermath of 9/11, the Bush administration seemingly forgot what it had declared just a few months ago, declining the invocation of Article Five and rejecting to make OEF a NATO operation. The suspended US support for an expeditionary alliance became problematic for Eastern and Central European countries, as the lasting resolution to their security dilemma that emerged due to the breakup of Soviet Union, rested on NATO's continued viability as a premier Euro-Atlantic security link. While the Balkans becalmed those states in the 'grey zone of Europe' by showing that NATO was going 'out-of-area' and was extending the security umbrella over both 'old' and 'new' members, this time Afghanistan undermined those potential allies' confidence in dealing with post-Cold War security challenges by simply joining NATO. For Eastern and Central Europe, it was obvious that without US support, NATO would

⁹⁵ 'The President in Europe; Bush's Vision: 'We Will Not Trade Away the Fate of Free European Peoples'', *The New York Times*, 16 June 2001.

not continue transformation, not to mention addressing the question of whether or when they could obtain NATO memberships. As a result, the Bush administration's decision to bypass NATO not only brought the US commitment to NATO into question, though President Clinton more than once confirmed his sponsorship for NATO persistence, but also left anxiety in the former Warsaw Pact states that were altered for decades by Soviet domination and wished to embrace NATO as a solution to end the residual fear of Russia.

6.3.1 The second and third rounds of NATO enlargement

In order to assess how Afghanistan influenced the ongoing transformation process of NATO, it is necessary firstly to revisit the geostrategic context as well as the implications of the decision to transform and especially to enlarge NATO. The year of 1989 saw the fall of the Berlin Wall, which changed traditional geopolitics and balance-of-power issues. Since then there has been shared concern in both Washington and European capitals that post-communist European countries were about to form the Continent's 'grey zone'. Similar concern was also apparent in Eastern Europe, fearing that the future might prove to have the same security dilemmas as those of the past. Hence finding a resolution to the residual regional security issues became the crucial challenge of the decade. Although countries like Hungary and the Czech Republic proposed to expand NATO as early as 1990, the idea of absorbing former Warsaw Pact satellites in the Alliance seemed to be risky and unrealistic in the immediate post-1989 period. However, after the unification of Germany and the collapse of the Soviet Union, two landmark events that redefined the security environment of Europe, it became unprecedentedly palpable that NATO's sustained viability remained of vital interest to the member states. On the other hand, given that the geostrategic vulnerability has resulted in limited capabilities of those Eastern European countries to deal independently with external threats, most of the post-Communism countries regarded NATO enlargement as the preferred resolution to the security dilemma, as by joining NATO they 'could anchor themselves in the West and 'return to Europe''.⁹⁶

⁹⁶ Andrew A. Michta (2009) 'NATO Enlargement Post-1989: Successful Adaption or Decline?', *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 18, No. 3, p. 366. President Vaclav Havel, Speech in the Polish

In spite of concerns emphasised at the Brussels Summit in 1994 about whether it was too quick to open the door, NATO enlargement was widely viewed as the framework for spreading as well as consolidating democracy across the post-Communism countries and for stabilising the 'grey zone of Europe'. The first round of enlargement invited Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic to enter the Alliance, which was hailed as a great success. This naturally led to an optimistic view that NATO should continue expansion and there should be a second, and a third round of enlargement coming soon. Since then, the Vilnius group created by the Baltics and seven Eastern European countries in May 2000, has been busy cooperating and lobbying for further membership.⁹⁷ Yet, the question remained about who would be allowed to join NATO. With regard to this, the 1999 Alliance's Washington Summit approved the Membership Action Plan (MAP), a mechanism that allowed the current members to review and provide 'both political and technical advice' to each candidate before issuing that country with an invitation to begin accession talks.⁹⁸ The final accession process, once launched, consisted of five steps leading to the signing of the accession protocols and the ratification, acceptance or approval of those protocols by the current NATO member countries.⁹⁹ In November 2002, at the Prague Summit, seven countries including Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia were invited to begin accession talks, the whole process of which was planned to be completed by May 2004. As expected, the 2004 Istanbul Summit finally announced the memberships of those invitees, marking the Alliance's second post-Cold War round of enlargement.

In the fall of 2006, Ivo Daalder and James Goldgeier published an article in *Foreign Affairs*, asserting that NATO would expand its membership on a global level.¹⁰⁰ Thereby, considering that the MAP has worked well in helping the aspirants prepare for possible future memberships, NATO was looking forward to inviting the Balkan Three, namely Albania, Croatia and Macedonia, to enter the Alliance at the Bucharest Summit in April 2008. However, the meeting only encountered the worsening of

Parliament, 25 January 1990.

⁹⁷ The members were: Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Republic of Macedonia, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia.

⁹⁸ 'Membership Action Plan (MAP)', NATO, 11 June 2012.

⁹⁹ 'The Road to NATO Membership', NATO, 29 March 2004.

¹⁰⁰ Ivo Daalder and James Goldgeier (2006) 'Global NATO', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 85, No. 05, pp. 105-133.

internal tensions of the organisation, resulting in a limited invitation to Albania and Croatia only. Although the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia¹⁰¹ had been participating in the MAP since 1999, it was blocked from joining the Alliance by the Greek objection to the country's name. In the wake of Bucharest, it seemed that NATO might have reached the limits of expansion for the foreseeable future. This daunting prospect of NATO enlargement immediately raised concerns about whether NATO failed to achieve its presetting targets, one of which referred to extending its security boundaries eastward. If so, NATO would lose the rationale for persisting as a useful alliance. What prevented the Alliance from absorbing more allies, especially considering that the enlargement process has gone particularly well since its launch? In other words, what stopped NATO from transforming itself into a more valid and more important organisation?

6.3.2 A mismatch between NATO's own two objectives

Actually since the initial attempt to frame a new purpose after the end of the Cold War, NATO has adapted by cohering around two objectives: expansion and 'out-of-area' missions. It was not enough to counter threats in the new security environment merely by relying on NATO enlargement, even though the total capability of NATO might increase due to the fact that more allies joined the Alliance.¹⁰² Thus, in addition to expansion, NATO had to make efforts to transform into a broader alliance that would shoulder more responsibility both in and out of area.

As the 1999 round of enlargement coincided with the decision to fight a war in Kosovo, it sowed the seeds of dissention over the current and future allied mission, especially about how far 'out-of-area' NATO would be ready to deploy. To evolve NATO into an expeditionary alliance, therefore, become the most worrisome trend, because the out-of-area NATO which went away from its traditional defensive mission was not the alliance those Eastern and Central European countries wanted to join. On the other hand, for Washington, NATO had to go 'out-of-area' and pursue

¹⁰¹ Turkey recognises the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.

¹⁰² Actually it was hard to conclude that NATO became more capable of dealing with security threats by expanding to include more Eastern and Central European states. See Andrew A. Michta (2009) pp. 363-376.

real rather than rhetoric transformation if it wanted to persist after the disappearance of the Soviet threat. But the poor performance in the Balkans saw NATO polarised by debates on whether shifting its original purpose of self-defence was a correct choice, resulting in reconsiderations in the US that NATO enlargement might need to be slowed down. Far from what the US envisaged, the Kosovo campaign turned out to be a Pandora's box, by opening which a series of military as well as political problems within the Alliance that had not been solved by NATO enlargement came out. In particular, 'war by committee' revealed an inherent problem of the Alliance due to 'national caveats', according to which 'governments place limits on what military activities their troops (are) allowed to do or where they (are) allowed to go in carrying out their missions'.¹⁰³ This restriction hindered commanders' efforts to generate consensus among member states, not only causing headaches during NATO operations in the Balkans, but also foreshadowing the long-term consequences for the Alliance to take on more missions.

NATO's engagement in missions ranging from Bosnia to Darfur repeated the intrinsic discord among allies, it, nonetheless, proved that the Alliance has overcome the doubts about its continuance that arose after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Given that the Alliance was a beginner to perform out-of-area operations, its termination of crises and rescue of innocent civilians clearly suggested that NATO's first attempt to transform into a viable alliance was a success. In other words, NATO withstood the test of dealing with new threats that were addressed at the 1991 Rome Summit. At that time, the faith in a better NATO was not low. Hence when terrorists attacked the US in 2001, there was a widespread belief that 'War on Terror' would further reinforce NATO's significance, as NATO has always been Washington's premier alliance and most of Washington's closest allies were members of NATO. However, NATO's actual role in the multifaceted struggle against terrorists was minor, not only because the Bush administration lost confidence in utilising this deeply institutionalised organisation, but also due to NATO's unsatisfactory contribution to this 'War on Terror'.

¹⁰³ Renee de Nevers (2007) 'NATO's International Security Role in the Terrorist Era', *International Security*, Vol. 31, No. 4, p. 51.

6.3.3 Why NATO failed to contribute to Washington's 'War on Terror'

Different strategies to combat terrorism. 9/11 facilitated a second shift in US policy towards key national security threat. Since then, terrorism has replaced 'instabilities'¹⁰⁴ to be a core focus. Notwithstanding that terrorism soon emerged as a shared alliance concern, the 'War on Terror' was a US creation. How should NATO contribute to combat terrorism under the condition that it was not a 'tool' of US policy? At the Prague Summit in November 2002, members of the Alliance endorsed the new Military Concept for Defence against Terrorism as official NATO policy, placing great emphasis on NATO's role in helping 'deter, defend, and protect against terrorist attacks'.¹⁰⁵ In this rubric, NATO's military guidelines referred to defensive and reactive counterterrorism activities. Yet US strategies differed from NATO's, seeking to prevent attacks before they occur. The divergence between America's offensive and NATO's defensive strategies to combat terrorism did not mean NATO would be useless, it just suggested that NATO would play a supportive rather than a lead role in the 'War on Terror'.

But what caused the difference between America's and NATO's strategies to combat terrorism? Simply, there were disagreements in threat perception among NATO members, which actually derived from NATO enlargement. By expanding eastward, the Alliance removed the potential threat of unstable countries along the borders of member states, creating divergences in security concerns: while some 'old' allies felt less threatened by traditional security concerns, some 'new' members continued to have territorial security concerns due to their proximity to Russia.¹⁰⁶ For the gravity of the terrorist threat, to be specific, member states also varied remarkably. Some saw the threat as significant, whereas the others perceived it to be limited. For example, only five countries in Europe being Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Spain had legislation about terrorism before 9/11. Since NATO allies held different threat perceptions, there was no doubt that they would differ on how to combat threats. Based on the distinct understanding of the nature of the terrorist threat, member states disagreed on whether the use of force was an appropriate method. Moreover, even

¹⁰⁴ 'Strategic Concept', 1991 Rome Summit.

¹⁰⁵ 'Prague Summit Declaration', NATO, 21 November 2002.

¹⁰⁶ Renee de Nevers (2007) p. 59.

those allies who regarded terrorism as severe and urgent in the same way as the US, especially France and Germany, disagreed with the US on strategies to suppress Islamist terrorism. European allies were particularly concerned about US unilateralism, fearing that they might be 'entrapped' by their alliance commitments to aid the unbridled 'War on Terror'.¹⁰⁷ As a result, the Alliance could only issue strategies as supplements to the US policy of preventive war, which not only lowered NATO's contribution to combat terrorism, but also reduced the US willingness to accept alliance constraints.

US preference. US strategy documents indicated that NATO's highly institutionalised, consensus-oriented model was not Washington's preferred approach for multilateral cooperation in the 'War on Terror'. For example, the US National Security Strategy (NSS) released in March 2006 clarified the US preference for a looser coalition that would rely on voluntary adherence rather than binding treaties, because 'in many cases coalitions of the willing (might) be able to respond more quickly and creatively, at least in the short term'.¹⁰⁸ Similarly, the 2006 Quadrennial Defence Review (QDR) also underlined the Pentagon's preference for 'dynamic partnerships' rather than 'static alliances'.¹⁰⁹ This time, European allies began to worry about US commitments to the Alliance, though they were more concerned about the US overusing NATO as a 'toolbox' when Washington announced its invasion of Iraq in 2003.

In fact, President Bush did not declare the bypassing of NATO in Afghanistan for nothing. It was the performance of those European allies that eventually heightened the US frustration with alliance constraints. Finding it extremely difficult to convince European member states to devote more resources and troops to the operation, the US became reluctant to count on its allies. According to then-Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld, 'It's kind of like having a basketball team, and they practice and practice and practice for six months. When it comes to game time, one or two say, 'We're not going to play.' Well, that's fair enough. Everyone has a free choice. But

¹⁰⁷ Galla Press-Barnathan (2006) 'Managing the Hegemon: NATO Under Unipolarity', *Security Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 2, pp. 301-303.

¹⁰⁸ President George W. Bush (2006) 'The National Security Strategy', March, p. 46.

¹⁰⁹ 'Quadrennial Defence Review Report', 6 February 2006, p. vii.

you don't have a free choice if you've practiced for all those months.'¹¹⁰ The perennial problem regarding the 'two-tiered' alliance has hindered NATO's capability in conducting 'out-of-area' operations for a long time. What was worse, although many European allies realised this problem, they lacked willingness to bridge the gap. To solve this dilemma, the US initially expected to enhance the Alliance's total military assets as well as capabilities through incorporating more member states. Yet NATO enlargement failed to transform new allies' militaries to accord with NATO standards.¹¹¹ As a result, no improvement of the Alliance's operational cooperation took place in the US war against terror, implying that the gap between what the US and its European allies were capable and willing to do was growing. Washington began to view NATO as unreliable, for working through the Alliance would compromise the mission and the safety of US forces. A senior State Department official thus explicitly expressed the US preference as follows: 'We *'ad hoc'* our way through coalitions of the willing. That's the future', which apparently reflected 'Washington's search for alternatives to the post-Second World War global architecture in the new era of its 'war on terror'''.¹¹²

In short, Washington and European capitals exhibited different threat perceptions, leading to their divergent strategies to combat terrorism. By embracing a defensive military guideline that was far from the US offensive strategy, NATO, though not purposely, sent a message to the US that it pursued a policy to shrink its contribution to the 'War on Terror'. With regard to this, the US moved to reconsider the utility of NATO, especially about whether the benefits of NATO's military mechanisms and political consultation outweighed the costs of working to build consensus within the Alliance when more resources and troops were required in the war against terror. Thus the US was motivated to change its preference for *ad hoc* coalitions, making the US commitment to working through institutionalised alliance structures unclear. The irony of disagreements between the US and its European allies in how to fight against terrorism was that, in times prior to the 'War on Terror', European members were

¹¹⁰ John D. Banusiewicz (2005) 'National Caveats' Among Key Topics at NATO Meeting', 9 February 2005.

¹¹¹ Wade Jacoby (2006) 'Is the New Europe a Good Substitute for the Old One?', *International Studies Review*, Vol. 8, No. 1, pp. 178-197.

¹¹² Guy Dinmore (2006) 'US Sees Coalition of the Willing as Best Ally', *The Financial Times*, 4 January.

extremely concerned about Washington using NATO as an instrument of extra-United Nations unilateral power, yet they began to worry about the US scaling down its commitment to the transatlantic organisation that has successfully provided security guarantee for Europe since WWII. This ultimately influenced the tone of the debate over US commitment to the Alliance following the Afghanistan mission.

6.3.4 The debate over US commitment to NATO following Afghanistan

Although the Bush administration decided to bypass NATO at the very beginning, it then agreed to transfer the US-led OEF to the NATO-led ISAF and sponsored the expansion of ISAF to assume responsibility for the entire Afghanistan operation. Apparently, Afghanistan was NATO's first ever deployment outside Europe, the range and scale of which peaked throughout the history of NATO operations. Hence, 'By taking on such a huge and challenging mission, NATO (was) putting its future on the line'.¹¹³ There was a great hope that the Afghanistan mission would help NATO transform itself into a more relevant and robust alliance to engage in more missions around the world. However, NATO failed to generate sufficient resources and troops from its member states for the Afghanistan mission, especially for the post-campaign reconstruction tasks, which highly reduced US confidence in the capability of NATO and thereby heightened US frustration with alliance constraints. One of the reasons was that the so-called 'national caveats', which has already been highlighted in the Balkans, became more problematic in Afghanistan where the operational effectiveness was damaged and allies did not share burdens and risks equally which caused friction among member states. European governments' hesitation strictly limited what their troops could do, making Afghanistan a deeply troubled place. Moreover, with the European public becoming inward-looking and America seen as unpopular, it became increasingly difficult to get those European allies to take on global military missions alongside the US. The disparity in members' contribution has long been a problem in NATO's operations, but not until the lack of resources and flexibility hindered the fulfilment of the Afghanistan mission did Washington determine to seriously reconsider its commitment to the Alliance.

¹¹³ Philip H. Gordon (2006) 'Back Up NATO's Afghanistan Force', *International Herald Tribune*, 8 January.

The US was the loudest voice encouraging NATO enlargement to incorporate Eastern and Central European countries after the end of the Cold War. Its initial expectation was to see the total military capabilities of NATO increasing by absorbing more member states. Yet in reality Washington became annoyed with its NATO allies, because 'the US-backed expansion of the alliance contributed to the erosion of NATO's military capabilities'.¹¹⁴ The states that entered NATO in 1999 and 2004 have not achieved the goals set for transforming their militaries to meet NATO standards. According to Andrew Michta, 'the more NATO has expanded to foster the military-political security of the new democratic states of eastern and south-eastern Europe, the less it seems capable of dealing with real security threats such as Afghanistan'.¹¹⁵ For the US, lessened alliance capabilities would be troublesome as long as it wanted to include alliance forces in its major operations. If by increasing the number of members, NATO would have its military capabilities decreased, why would the US continue to support enlargement?

To answer this question, it is necessary to review the crucial factor that promoted the decision of NATO enlargement: Russia. As Soviet forces withdrew from Eastern and Central Europe, pressure to join NATO grew in this region. Those former Warsaw Pact states still could not get rid of the residual fear of Russia, embracing NATO as the preferred solution to their security dilemmas. Yeltsin's Russia, however, differed from what was envisaged. Instead of rapidly re-emerging as an enemy to the West again, it sank into its post-imperial morass and ceased to be an immediate threat. Hence there was great expectation in the 1990s that Russia would be part of the new order and might gain membership of NATO. For example, Russia agreed in principle to participate in the Bosnia implementation force in 1995, and signed the NATO-Russia Charter in Paris in May 1997, both of which hugely facilitated the dialogue between NATO and Russia. But the 'cooperation' between Russia and NATO has not survived the passage of time. The anticipation that Russia was unlikely to re-emerge as a threat for at least another decade proved hollow.

¹¹⁴ Renee de Nevers (2007) p. 62.

¹¹⁵ Andrew A. Michta (2009) p. 363.

The renewed hostility from Putin's Russia, though indirectly, hindered NATO enlargement, particularly the possible Georgian and Ukrainian membership. The Russo-Georgian war of August 2008 revealed the sharp divisions within NATO. France and Germany were unwilling to accept Georgia's excuse that it went to war to protect its territorial integrity and blamed Tbilisi as the party responsible for the conflict, while the US and some 'new' allies including Poland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania took a much more pro-Georgia stance, believing that 'Russia has invaded a sovereign neighbouring state and threatens a democratic government elected by its people'.¹¹⁶ No matter whether it was Georgia or Russia that bore the ultimate responsibility for the initiation of hostilities, the war nonetheless had a powerful impact on NATO's internal debates over future enlargement. To be specific, the Georgian public was overwhelmingly in favour of NATO membership following Moscow's military action against Georgia. This appeal quickly gained support from President Lech Kaczynski of Poland and his counterparts from Ukraine, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania who warned that refusal to give Georgia fast-track access to NATO membership 'was seen as a green light for aggression'.¹¹⁷ Yet this view stood in stark contrast to the statement from French and German officials. For them, those five Eastern European countries were biased because they all had memories of occupation by Russia. Paris and Berlin avoided designating a culprit in the conflict, but not all Western Europeans chose to stay 'neutral'. Italy appeared to side with Russia. According to Franco Frattini, Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, 'We cannot create an anti-Russia coalition in Europe, and on this point we are close to Putin's position'.¹¹⁸ The division between Western and Eastern Europeans over the Russo-Georgian conflict actually sent a bad message that NATO membership might be jeopardised in the future. Given that France and Germany has already blocked a US proposal to give Georgia and Ukraine the MAP at the Bucharest Summit, those 'old' European members were more likely to lose appetite for NATO enlargement into the Caucasus after the conflict, though they insisted that 'if anything, the conflict had dimmed Georgian chances of joining NATO in the near future because the strategic

¹¹⁶ Kevin Connolly (2008) 'US Has Only Tough Talk for Russia', *BBC News*, 12 August.

¹¹⁷ Katrin Bennhold (2008) 'Differences Emerge in Europe of A Response to Georgia Conflict', *The New York Times*, 12 August.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

environment in the region became more fragile'.¹¹⁹ What NATO members learned from the Russo-Georgian war was that the Alliance should not press further east, otherwise it would encounter striking frictions not only between the US and Europe, but between some leaders in Western and Eastern Europe.

Much of the uncertainty about NATO's long-term future has been caused by the failure to match the Alliance's two objectives set for the post-Cold War era: the enlargement and the military transformation especially in 'out-of-area' missions. The paradox was that the more NATO has expanded, the less it seemed capable of countering security threats. NATO enlargement succeeded in transforming some post-communist countries into democratic ones, however, it failed to achieve consensus on the shared missions such as Afghanistan and to provide sufficient military support. NATO has struggled more after the Cold War to generate resources and troops from its member states to guarantee the success of 'out-of-area' operations because the total military capability of the Alliance did not increase with the number of member states. Consequently, NATO sank into more heated debates over its purpose following the enlargement in the 1990s and the engagement in the Balkans and Afghanistan. The Alliance was pulled in two directions: to continue expansion and transformation until assuming a global expeditionary role for a broad spectrum of missions; or to remain as a regional limited defensive organisation. The first vision of NATO's role was promoted by the US and shared to varying degrees by Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, Denmark, and of course most of the 'new' allies who saw NATO enlargement as the preferred solution to their security dilemmas. On the other hand, France, as the strongest European voice concerning US unilateralism, wanted NATO to play a regional defensive role and to support an independent European military capability at the same time. Germany, though changed to be a NATO booster, has shared the French vision for a long time. Tensions in the transatlantic relationship not only hindered the enlargement process, but also reduced NATO contribution to the 'out-of-area' missions. The failure of Afghanistan was predicted to be a fatal blow to the Alliance and to the future of multinational peacekeeping, but it also reminded the US that if NATO wanted to remain viable, it needed to have a more operational focus

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

than ever before. What has driven the US agenda is expansion, and what has tied the US to Europe is the need to deal with common threats.

Since the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the US has given greater attention to the fight against terrorism and the spread of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), so the decisive question for NATO's future was whether that US view would be shared by both 'old' and 'new' European allies and whether all NATO members were willing to contribute not only politically but also militarily to the shared missions. This provoked a thorough analysis of NATO issues and tasks, and virtually, presented an opportunity for 'rethinking, reprioritising and reforming NATO' in the context of economic crises.¹²⁰ Thus new and emerging security threats drove NATO to reassess and review its strategic posture, which ultimately brought allied leaders to produce a 'New Strategic Concept' at the Lisbon Summit in November 2010. The 2010 Strategic Concept 'Active Engagement, Modern Defence' was a clear and resolute statement on NATO's enduring purpose and fundamental security tasks, which, according to NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, 'will put in an Alliance that is more effective, more engaged and more efficient than ever before'.¹²¹ After stressing the urgency of countering existing and emerging threats, including the proliferation of ballistic missiles, nuclear weapons and WMDs, terrorism, cyber attacks and fundamental environmental problems, the 'New Strategic Concept' presented NATO's three core tasks—collective defence, crisis management and cooperative security. Since defence and deterrence has always been NATO's greatest responsibility, the 2010 Strategic Concept placed more emphasis on the latter two tasks. The Alliance would proceed to deepen and extend 'a more inclusive, flexible and open relationship' with NATO partners across the globe including Russia and countries of the Mediterranean and the Gulf region, and accelerate its transformation to develop stronger operational capabilities in order to 'engage, where possible and when necessary, to prevent crises, manage crises, stabilise post-conflict institutions and support reconstruction'.¹²²

¹²⁰ 'NATO's Strategic Documents Since 1949', NATO, 30 May 2012.

¹²¹ 'NATO Adopts New Strategic Concept', NATO, 19 November 2010.

¹²² 'The Current Strategic Concept' and 'NATO's Strategic Documents Since 1949', NATO, 30 May 2012.

The 2010 Strategic Concept adopted at the Lisbon Summit, one of the most important Summits in the Alliance's history, reflected a transformed security environment and a transformed Alliance. Many security analysts portrayed this new Strategic Concept as a balancing act, for it aimed to balance new threats with old ones and to accommodate the interests of small countries and big ones. But more importantly, it stressed the need for the Alliance to remain cost-effective and made continuous internal reform a key aspect of the way NATO would do business in the future. As a result, how best NATO could reform to adapt military structures and capabilities to equip its member states for new missions would be crucial to determine NATO's persistence.

Chapter 7: NATO's Engagement in Libya

7.1 Introduction

Both Chapter Seven and Chapter Eight seek to explain the continuing US commitment to NATO in the post-Cold War era by researching in some depth the operation in Libya. The case study on Libya is especially important in exploring the Obama administration's understanding of the purpose of NATO in the context of current economic pressures, domestic US debates about post-War on Terror interventions, and of increasing American preoccupation with Pacific (rather than European) security. To be specific, this chapter mainly introduces the background to the US response to the Libya crisis and the general analysis about the shifts in US decision-making. The following chapter discusses in detail why the US hesitated to intervene in Libya at the very beginning and why the US eventually decided to participate in the Libyan mission, but in a way of 'leading from behind'. It also addresses the so-called 'Libyan model' that reflects on not only the redefinition of the 'American way of war', but also the future of NATO. In addition to secondary sources, the analysis on US policy-making in the case of Libya also draws on interviews with both government officials and academic experts, which have been conducted in Washington D. C. in 2012.

7.2 The Libyan crisis

Early in 2011, overwhelming anti-government protests swept North Africa: Tunisian President Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali who had been in power for 23 years was forced to flee the country immediately; Egyptian President Muhammed Hosni Mubarak who had maintained his 30-plus year hold on authority had no choice but to step down from office in just 18 days. These astonishing political changes in neighbouring Tunisia and Egypt encouraged similar protests in Algeria, Iraq, Bahrain, Yemen, and Libya. The crisis in Libya was triggered on February 15 by a chain of protests in Benghazi, the second largest city of Libya, and many other eastern cities that quickly spiralled out of Muammar al Gaddafi's control. The reason why Libya fell into chaos

was not unanimously agreed. Some people advocated that the Abu Salim Prison massacre that shocked the world in 1996 was the direct cause. Hundreds of prisoners were shot and killed by Gaddafi's security forces that year, and the Libyan government refused to punish the criminals, though it promised to compensate. Hence, Libyan opposition groups called for a 'day of rage' on February 17, 2011 to commemorate protests that had occurred five years earlier. Others believed that the real cause behind protests lay in the fraud of Libyan reform. Gaddafi had long insisted that he held no formal government position, but by all accounts he enjoyed ultimate authority, denying Libyans the most basic political rights. Therefore, the long-simmering Libyan reform debate was brought to the boiling point, requiring Gaddafi to transfer power peacefully.

In response, Libyan security forces opened fire with heavy weaponry on protestors. Fighter jets and helicopter gunships attacked people who had no means to defend themselves.¹ Sayf al Islam Al Gaddafi, the eldest of Gaddafi's sons, highlighted 'We will eradicate them all' and warned the public that the conflict might escalate into a civil war during his televised speech on February 20.² Hence, the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said Gaddafi had lost his legitimacy when he declared war on his people, urging Gaddafi that 'the human rights and freedom of assembly and freedom of speech must be fully protected' and that the authorities must immediately halt violence against civilians.³ At the end of February, Hillary Clinton travelled to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva to remind the international community that it had a responsibility to protect universal rights and to hold violators accountable. She said that Gaddafi had 'lost the legitimacy to govern' and 'the people of Libya have made themselves clear: It is time for Gaddafi to go—now, without further violence or delay'.⁴ However, Gaddafi ignored the condemnation and insisted on further repression against demonstrators, which caused a tremendous increase in the death toll.⁵ According to the United Nations report, protestors killed by Gaddafi's

¹ 'Libya: Benghazi Clashes Deadly—Witnesses', *BBC News*, 18 February 2011.

² 'Gaddafi Son: "We Will Eradicate Them All"', *The Guardian*, 21 February 2011. 'Libya on Brink As Protests Hit Tripoli', *The Guardian*, 21 February 2011.

³ 'Libyan Leader Muammar Gaddafi Appears on State TV', *BBC News*, 22 February 2011. 'Security Council Authorises "All Necessary Measures" to Protect Civilians in Libya', *UN News Centre*, 17 March 2011.

⁴ Hillary Clinton's memoir: Hillary Clinton (2014) *Hard Choices*, London: Simon and Schuster, p. 365.

⁵ 'Death Toll in Libya Protest "Hits 120"', *Sky News*, 19 February 2011.

family-led security forces amounted to a thousand in the first ten days, and civilians that died during the conflict reached three thousands in just half a month.⁶ But Libyan state TV denied there had been any massacres, dismissing the report as 'baseless lies' by foreign media. Gaddafi even called foreign news channels 'dogs' when he appeared on state television on February 22.⁷ Regarding Gaddafi's comment as an insult, Libya's diplomats at the UN in New York including Deputy Permanent Representative Ibrahim Dabbashi and Libya's most senior diplomat Ali Aujali, called for international intervention to stop Gaddafi's violent action against street demonstration in their homeland.⁸

Shocked by Gaddafi's brutality, the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1970 on February 26, establishing an arms embargo to prohibit weapons transfers to Libya; granting the International Criminal Court (ICC) jurisdiction over crimes committed in Libya on or after February 15, 2011; imposing targeted financial and travel sanctions on Gaddafi and certain individuals; and calling on member states to support humanitarian response efforts.⁹ But the Resolution 1970 did not authorise the use of military force by member states, leading to subsequent debate over the necessity of military intervention. This culminated in the passage of Resolution 1973 on March 17, which demanded the immediate ceasefire and a no-fly zone in Libyan airspace; granted member states to take all necessary measures to protect civilians; authorised robust enforcement inspection measures for the arms embargo established by Resolution 1970, and expanded targeted financial and travel sanctions on Libyan individuals and entities.¹⁰

⁶ On February 25, 2011, according to resolution S-15/1 entitled 'Situation of Human Rights in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya', the UN's Human Rights Council established the International Commission of Inquiry on Libya and gave it the mandate 'to investigate all alleged violations of international human rights law in Libya, to establish the facts and circumstances of such violations and of the crimes perpetrated and, where possible, to identify those responsible, to make recommendations, in particular, on accountability measures, all with a view to ensuring that those individuals responsible are held accountable'. See A/HRC/S-15/1, 'Report of the Human Rights Council on Its Fifteenth Special Session', 25 February 2011; and A/HRC/19/68, 'Report of the International Commission of Inquiry on Libya', 2 March 2012.

⁷ 'Libyan Leader Muammar Gaddafi Appears on State TV', *BBC News*, 22 February 2011.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ The UN Security Council Resolution 1970, 26 February 2011.

¹⁰ The UN Security Council Resolution 1973, 17 March 2011.

In fact, not until Resolution 1973 did the US make decisions to unfold military operations against Libyan military targets. Prior to this, America hesitated to make any stance, in addition to delivering several vague speeches: the highest-level statement at that moment by the US government on the accelerating strife in Libya was made by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton who, though condemning the violence in Libya and calling for a halt to the 'unacceptable bloodshed' in response to civil unrest, only aimed to 'convey this message to the Libyan government' rather than claiming US support of the Libyan people.¹¹ Yet after about one month, the US determined to get involved. What a difference one month made. The reason why the US felt reluctant to intervene in Libya at first; why it changed its mind to join the operation later, and why it transferred the task to NATO and adopted the strategy of 'leading from behind' reflected not only the reconsideration of styling the US as a 'global policeman', but also the new definition of 'American way of war' under which America would participate in operations conditionally.

7.3 US response: from hesitation to intervention

7.3.1 Hesitation

'America, it is time to focus on nation-building here at home.'¹² President Obama restated his doctrine of opposing more military entanglements and scaling down the US commitments overseas when announcing the withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan in June 2011. There seemed to be a strong sense among an overwhelming majority of policymakers and the public that America should no longer declare new conflict involvements, given the overstretched position due to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the pressures for austerity at home. In such circumstances, Robert Gates, then-Secretary of Defence, became one of the pioneers to oppose US involvement in Libya. In March 2011, he made a statement as follows: 'My view would be, if there is going to be that kind of assistance (providing arms) to the opposition, there are plenty of sources for it other than the United States.' He further added that NATO would act only 'if there is demonstrable need, a sound legal basis and strong regional support'

¹¹ 'Clinton to Libya: End "Unacceptable Bloodshed"', *CNN*, 22 February 2011.

¹² 'Time to Focus on Nation Building Here at Home', *ABC News*, 22 June 2011.

for military action.¹³ Far worse was Gates' answer when asked if there would be US 'boots on the ground'. According to *the New York Times*, Gates swiftly replied 'Not as long as I am in this job'.¹⁴

The immediate US response to the Libyan crisis could date back to early February when the US evacuated its citizens in Libya. President Obama then condemned the bloodshed in Libya as 'outrageous' and claimed that America would resort to a 'full range of options we have to respond to this crisis'.¹⁵ However, though the President reiterated that the US 'will stand with (the Libyan people) in the face of unwarranted violence', he did not specifically describe what kind of assistance the US was prepared to provide. He also called for Gaddafi to step down, but did not elaborate on the specific steps the US planned to take to support that outcome. In response to the growing violence in Libya, the President issued Executive Order 13566 on February 25, which imposed significant economic sanctions on Gaddafi, his government, and close associates. Also on that day, Hillary Clinton approved a policy to revoke the visas held by those Libyan officials responsible for the recent human rights violations, and suspended the very limited military cooperation the US had with Libya.¹⁶ But on the other hand, as one senior defence official said on March 13, the US military did not want to send troops into Libya, even for humanitarian purposes, until Gaddafi had left power.¹⁷ In fact, what America militarily did in early March was to reposition naval assets in the central Mediterranean Sea. But this decision was irrelevant to military intervention because the US forces were only allowed to monitor the United

¹³ Karen Parrish (2011) 'Gates: NATO's Libya Plans To Include Military Options', *US Fed News*, 10 March. Gates' idea was also shared by the Alliance's Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, who told reporters that NATO was considering a 'range of options', including humanitarian help, but that any move would be governed by three principles: that there was 'demonstrable need', a 'clear legal basis' and 'firm regional support'. See Alan Cowell and Steven Erlanger (2011) 'France Becomes First Country to Recognise Libyan Rebels', *The New York Times*, 10 March.

¹⁴ Elisabeth Bumiller and Thom Shanker (2011) '2 Cabinet Officials Say US Isn't Likely to Arm Libyans', *The New York Times*, 31 March. Elliott Abrams (2011) 'Mr. Gates Oversteps', *The Council on Foreign Relations*, 31 March. 'Gates: No US Ground Troops in Libya on His Watch', *USA Today*, 31 March.

¹⁵ President Obama (2011) 'Remarks by the President on Libya', 23 February.

¹⁶ Hillary Clinton (2011) 'Holding the Qaddafi Government Accountable', US Department of State, 26 February. 'United States Activities in Libya', *Foreign Policy*, 15 June 2011, p. 5.

¹⁷ Julian Barnes (2011) 'US Wary of Libya Role', *The Wall Street Journal*, 12 March.

Nations arms embargo and to provide support for humanitarian efforts by the UN, EU and others.¹⁸

For Gaddafi, the growing US pressure on him was ‘only the latest in a series of twists and turns in the relationship between Washington and Tripoli over his 42 years of rule’.¹⁹ Therefore, unafraid of the limited international response, Gaddafi continued to advance its military forces toward the opposition-held cities of eastern Libya, raising the possibility that civilians would be targeted and a humanitarian crisis would occur. In a series of statements via state television and radio, Gaddafi required citizens to disarm in exchange for ‘general amnesty’ and ‘protection’ or to choose exile.²⁰ He also added ‘We will not show mercy’ to the city of Benghazi and its population of 700,000, and those who refused Gaddafi’s terms were labelled as ‘rats’, ‘apostates’, and ‘traitors’ and would face a ‘purge’ that would proceed ‘room by room’ and ‘individual by individual’.²¹ Thousands of people were forced to flee Libya and remain in temporary Tunisian and Egyptian border transit camps. Gaddafi denied that he had purposefully targeted civilians, whereas his overreaction to protests unveiled his conspiracy to upgrade the conflict to a humanitarian crisis, wakening America and the international community to the view that ‘Gaddafi must go’.

7.3.2 Intervention

Apparently, the reason why America was reluctant to intervene in Libya at first lay in domestic pressures. The legacy of the US ‘War on Terror’ scared both the US policymakers and the public, who could not bear the US sinking into another ‘quagmire’ as in the cases of Afghanistan and Iraq. Inside the administration, the debate mainly centred on the question of humanitarian intervention—whether it was worth ‘saving strangers’ regardless of cost—one that continued to vex the

¹⁸ Karen Parrish (2011) ‘Gates: NATO’s Libya Plans To Include Military Options’, *US Fed News*, 10 March.

¹⁹ ‘Clinton to Libya: End “Unacceptable Bloodshed”’, 22 February 2011.

²⁰ OSC Report GMP20110316950007, ‘Libyan Army Announces Advance on Benghazi’, 16 March 2011; and, OSC Report GMP20110317676005, ‘Al-Gaddafi Asks Benghazi People To Abandon “Traitors” Vows to “Confront” NATO’, 17 March 2011.

²¹ ‘Statement on Libyan TV Says Gaddafi Forces Await “Zero Hour” to Retake Benghazi’, OSC Report GMP20110316950075, 16 March 2011, and OSC Report GMP20110317676005.

governments of the US and other democracies.²² According to Susan Rice, the Iraq war had set back the cause of humanitarian intervention by discrediting American military missions abroad and making it more difficult to rally consensus to stop a massacre.²³ But when economic sanctions and diplomatic means were proved failures in stopping Gaddafi and when those innocent civilians were pleading with the international community to save them, should the US continue to brush off the enquiry with meaningless verbal condemnation?²⁴ It was understandable that Washington was under considerable military, economic and political pressure due to its overstretched position around the world, but was that a persuasive argument on US inability to conduct necessary military intervention, given Gaddafi's brutality and intransigence, the Arab leaders' hostility toward Gaddafi, and the determination by Britain and France that military intervention in Libya was in their interests?

Answers to these questions could be found from previous experience. Taking the case of Cote d'Ivoire in 2010-2011 as an example, if international military action had taken place earlier to oust Laurent Gbagbo and install Alassane Ouattara, the tragedy of a million refugees and a ravaged economy would not have continued for so long. The Cote d'Ivoire conflict provided a contrast to Libya and illustrated what would happen in the absence of a serious military option. 'Military force is not a panacea, and its use is not a cause for celebration. However, in situations of ongoing mass atrocities it is a crucial option.'²⁵ President Obama was thereby motivated, stressing in his speech that without military action to stop Gaddafi's repression, 'the writ of the United Nations Security Council would have been shown to be little more than empty words, crippling that institution's future credibility to uphold global peace and security'.²⁶ According to him, the dominant motivation for using military forces in Libya was to avert a humanitarian disaster and fulfil the 'Responsibility to Protect' (R2P). This irrefutable rationale for US military intervention in Libya helped remove all

²² Nicholas Wheeler (2002) *Saving Strangers: Humanitarian Intervention in International Society*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

²³ Massimo Calabresi (2011) 'Susan Rice: A Voice for Intervention', *Time*, 24 March.

²⁴ According to a Gallup poll conducted in 2012, 75% of the Libyans said that they favoured intervention and supported NATO's military involvement in their nation's conflict. See Jay Loschky (2012) 'Opinion Briefing: Libyans Eye New Relations With the West', *Gallup Politics*, 13 August.

²⁵ Thomas G. Weiss (2011) 'R2P Alive and Well after Libya', *Ethics and International Affairs*, Vol. 25, No.3, p. 290.

²⁶ President Obama (2011) 'Remarks by the President in Address to the Nation on Libya'.

suspicions and enabled the Obama administration to declare its participation in the Libyan mission eventually.

On March 18, President Obama made more explicit remarks about US intervention in light of the Resolution 1973, stating that ‘a ceasefire must be implemented immediately’ and ‘all attacks against civilians must stop’. He also underscored that ‘Gaddafi must stop his troops from advancing on Benghazi, pull them back from Ajdabiya, Misurata, and Zawiya, and establish water, electricity and gas supplies to all areas. Humanitarian assistance must be allowed to reach the people of Libya’. Emphasising that the terms were ‘not negotiable’, the President warned Gaddafi that if he refused to ‘comply with the Resolution, the international community will impose consequences, and the Resolution will be enforced through military action’. To deflect unnecessary debates over the US policy, President Obama specified that ‘the US is not going to deploy ground troops into Libya. And we are not going to use force to go beyond a well-defined goal—specifically, the protection of civilians in Libya’.²⁷ He made things clear about US limited military objectives, requiring that all attacks against civilians must stop; Gaddafi must stop his troops from advancing on Benghazi and establish water, electricity and gas supplies to all areas; and humanitarian assistance must be allowed to reach the people of Libya. This statement was welcomed by House of Representatives Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi in the first place: ‘I commend the President for his leadership and prudence on how our nation will proceed in regards to Libya and work in concern with European and Arab allies to address the crisis’.²⁸

7.3.3 Consultation with the Congress

Although the administration did not claim a leading role in the Libyan mission such as the public worried about, it still faced the obstacle of persuading the Congress to accept the policy of intervention. According to John Boehner, the Speaker of the US House of Representatives, as long as Robert Gates’ three conditions on US/NATO’s participation in Libya were met (demonstrable need; a sound legal basis, and strong

²⁷ President Obama (2011) ‘Remarks by the President on the Situation in Libya’, 18 March.

²⁸ ‘Democratic Leader Pelosi Issues Statement Following President Obama’s Remarks on Libya’, *US Fed News*, 18 March 2011.

regional support), the US would be able to declare its moral obligation to stand with those who seek freedom from oppression and self-government for their people.²⁹ This resulted in supporters of intervention busily listing how those conditions had already been met. Firstly, NATO Defence Ministers shared concerns about Gaddafi's escalating attacks on the Libyan people, agreeing on the 'demonstrable need' to intervene. Secondly, the United Nations Security Council passed the Resolution 1973, offering the international community 'a sound legal basis' to prevent the slaughter of Libyan civilians by Muammar al Gaddafi's forces and a massive humanitarian crisis. Last, the anti-Gaddafi Transitional National Council (TNC) established in February successfully got recognition as 'the sole legitimate representative of the Libyan people', providing US/NATO with 'strong regional support' during the operation.

With regard to the fulfilment of those specific requirements, it seemed that the Congress would agree on US involvement in Libya. Yet, doubts about the utility of military intervention did not fade away as expected, quite the opposite; a broader discussion arose in the Congress, debating over the rationale, timing, authorisation, goals, costs and implications of US participation in Libya. On March 20, House Republican Leader John Boehner stressed that before any further military commitments were made, 'the administration has a responsibility to define for the American people, the Congress, and our troops what the mission in Libya is, better explain what America's role is in achieving that mission, and make clear how it will be accomplished'.³⁰ President Obama wrote a response letter to congressional leaders the next day, clarifying that US military forces sent to Libya on March 19 only aimed to 'prevent a humanitarian catastrophe and address the threat posed to international peace and security by the crisis in Libya' and to help prepare a no-fly zone. He also narrowed the role of US forces, stating that 'US military efforts are discreet and focused on employing unique US military capabilities to set the coalition for our European allies and Arab partners to carry out the measures authorised by the United Nations Security Council Resolution'.³¹ However, two Senate resolutions including S. Res. 146 and S. Res. 148 which were sponsored by Senator John Cornyn (R-TX) and

²⁹ 'Rep. Boehner Issues Statement on Libya', *US Fed News*, 20 March 2011.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ President Obama (2011) 'Letter from the President Regarding the Commencement of Operations in Libya', 21 March.

Senator John Ensign (R-NV) respectively, continued to underscore the sense of the Senate that 'US military intervention in Libya, as explained by the President, is not in the vital interests of the US' and the President should submit 'a detailed description of the limitations the President has placed on the nature, duration, and scope of US military operations in Libya, as referenced in his March 21, 2011, letter to Congress'.³²

The President finally convinced the Congress by confirming his stance that 'broadening our military mission to include regime change would be a mistake' while emphasising the US ability 'to stop Gaddafi's forces in their tracks without putting American troops on the ground'.³³ As a typical representative who worried about US policy on Libya, Senator Jeff Bingaman (D-NM) commended the President's speech on March 28, saying that 'I think the President made a strong case for why he had committed US military assets to this effort. I was encouraged to hear that this is going to be a limited mission...He was clear that we are not pursuing regime change through military action.'³⁴

However, with US participation being found to have involved more than 200 Tomahawk cruise missiles fired at Libya and the bombing and strafing by US and allied planes of Gaddafi's ground forces, the Congress began to accuse the President of not telling the public the truth about the operation. Representative Mike Coffman, Republican of Colorado, argued that the White House's description of the Libyan mission, which would be a humanitarian one to protect Libyan civilians, was not true. 'These are combat operations', he continued, 'I do not know why this administration has not been honest with the American people that this is about regime change'. He further concluded, 'This is just the most muddled definition of an operation probably in US military history'.³⁵ If Coffman was charging the White House with 'mission creep' in Libya, Senator John McCain (R-AZ) would be regarded as the first on the offensive charging the administration with not doing enough. When the President announced the US plan of ending airstrikes in Libya unless requested by NATO at the

³² S. Res. 146 and S. Res. 148, 112th Congress, 14 April 2011.

³³ President Obama (2011) 'Remarks by the President in Address to the Nation on Libya', 28 March.

³⁴ 'Sen. Bingaman Reacts to President Obama's Speech on Libya', *US Fed News*, 28 March 2011.

³⁵ Elisabeth Bumiller and Thom Shanker (2011).

end of March, McCain argued that Obama's plan 'would be a profound mistake with potentially disastrous consequences'. Withdrawing the muscle of the US military, according to him, was in fact out of alignment with Obama's policy goal of ousting Gaddafi.³⁶ Representative Howard McKeon, Republican of California and the chairman of the House Committee took the same view, criticising that the administration walked away from the conflict too fast. He warned, 'If Gaddafi does not face an imminent military defeat or refuses to abdicate...it seems that NATO could be expected to support a decade-long no-fly zone enforcement like the one over Iraq in the 1990s'.³⁷

In response, in his Congressional testimony, Robert Gates, though in an awkward position of having to defend a military action that he had been reluctant to get into in the first place, showed strong support for Obama's decision. Although Gates did not regard regime change as part of the military mission, he admitted that it was a policy objective in Libya. Further, he repeated that he expected US involvement to be limited and that the conflict would probably end with Gaddafi's removal from power, either by economic and political pressures or by his own people.³⁸ As a result, the pressure from the Congress did not alter the US decision on either expanding the Libyan mission to include regime change or scaling down US participation in coming days.

7.4 Mission transition till 'leading from behind'

7.4.1 Mission transition

Since March 19, coalition military operations under the auspices of the US-led Operation Odyssey Dawn (OOD) had achieved the objective of setting up a no-fly zone over Libya. The US McConnell Airmen packed pallets and loaded into deploying KC-135 Stratotankers, which would enable the 13-member coalition to take advantage over Gaddafi's forces as soon as possible. However, the situation in Libya

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Daniel Dombey (2011) 'Gates Warns on Protracted Libya Conflict', *The Financial Times*, 1 April.

³⁸ Ibid. Elisabeth Bumiller and Thom Shanker (2011). Oren Dorell (2011) 'Stalemate in Libya Could Present Dangerous Dilemma', *USA Today*, 31 March.

was not significantly improved. Admiral Gerard P. Hueber told Pentagon reporters that forces loyal to Gaddafi continued to advance on Benghazi, and refused to pull back from Misurata and Ajdabiya, and Gaddafi continued to fire on civilians and civilian sites in those cities.³⁹ Though the US enjoyed a broad range of offensive and defensive assets, it could not guarantee that the Libyan mission could be smoothly transferred to NATO on March 31 as assumed. Hence, America unfolded some updates. The US Africa Command (AFRICOM) took the lead on the OOD, enforcing the arms embargo and no-fly zone and overseeing airlift operations to deliver US-donated humanitarian relief supplies. Tactical US operations for OOD were coordinated by a Joint Task Force which provided operational and tactical command and control of US military forces supporting the international response to the unrest in Libya and enforcement of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973, and would have operational responsibility for the NATO-led Operation Unified Protector in Libya and the Mediterranean.

The transition from the US-led OOD to the NATO-led Operation Unified Protector went seamlessly. NATO allies reached a unanimous agreement on March 24 to direct NATO to assume command and control of the civilian protection. The next day, President Obama and his team provided an update on accomplishments to date, including the full transfer of enforcement of the no-fly zone to NATO. Although US military forces were supposed to undertake fewer missions under the NATO command, it weighed up more Libyan moves during the early stage of transition. The US Treasury banned American companies from dealing with 14 entities controlled by Libya's National Oil Company. The Obama administration also required the Pentagon and CIA to propose ways that the US could increase its assistance to Libyan rebels, beginning with shipments of nonlethal equipment, and potentially escalating to large-scale transfers of weapons.⁴⁰ A US military fighter jet damaged two of Gaddafi's surface-to-air missile sites near the Libyan capital of Tripoli on April 18.⁴¹ On April 25, US Predator drones began to strike targets in Libya for the first time, wrecking rocket launchers that had been bombarding civilians in Mistrata.⁴² The US leveraged

³⁹ 'Coalition Partners Assume More Responsibility in Libya', *US Fed News*, 23 March 2011.

⁴⁰ Adam Entous and Keith Johnson (2011) 'US Weighs More Libya Moves', *The Wall Street Journal*, 2 April.

⁴¹ 'DOD: US Continues Support of NATO Operations in Libya', *US Fed News*, 20 April 2011.

⁴² Julian Barnes and Charles Levinson (2011) 'US Drones Hit Targets in Libya', *The Wall Street*

its military capabilities to halt Gaddafi's offensive actions and damage his air defence systems before transferring full command and control responsibility to the NATO-led coalition. The US, instead of acting alone, helped mobilise the international community for collective actions and create conditions for all partners to work toward mutual goals. Since March 31, three-quarters of over 10,000 sorties had been flown by non-US coalition partners, and all 20 ships enforcing arms embargo had been European or Canadian ones. NATO Defence Ministers, who trusted NATO for its clear international legal mandate and broad multilateral support, determined to maintain this momentum by agreeing to extend the NATO-led Operation Unified Protector for another 90 days after June 27. They affirmed that operations would continue 'until all attacks and threats against civilians and civilian populated areas have stopped...until the regime has pulled back all its forces...and until there is a credible and verifiable ceasefire'.⁴³ All these paved the way for NATO to stay the course and keep up the pressure to achieve Gaddafi's departure.

7.4.2 Selection of an opposition group

With NATO having successfully degraded Gaddafi's forces by roughly 30 to 40% and gradually obtained the equipment and capabilities needed to protect the Libyan people, America handed over the mission and started 'leading from behind'. Guided by the new role, the US turned to focus on providing humanitarian relief supplies. Joint State Department/US Agency for International Development (USAID) humanitarian assessment teams (HATs) were deployed to the Libya-Egypt and Tunisia-Libya borders. The amounts of total USAID and state humanitarian assistance for the Libyan operation reached \$89,425,925 as of August 12, 2011.⁴⁴ But the key question for US policymakers to resolve at this stage was not simply how to make contributions to humanitarian relief and other programmes for those fleeing the conflict, but which Libyan opposition group to select for the upcoming nation-building tasks.

Journal, 25 April.

⁴³ 'NATO to Maintain High Operational Tempo as Long as Necessary in Libya', NATO, 14 April 2011.

⁴⁴ US Agency for International Development (USAID), US Government Humanitarian Fact Sheet No. 39, Fiscal Year 2011, 12 August 2011.

This question became urgent when Gaddafi's forces were enabled to recover from their late-March setbacks owing to the disorganised and undisciplined behaviour of the opposition forces. Although the coalition intervention had reversed Gaddafi's advance on Benghazi, increasing the possibility that the opposition could press Gaddafi's retreating forces westward, in reality, the opposition forces retreated eastward once again to the formerly rebel-held town of Ajdabiya due to their weakness on the battlefield. What is worse, Gaddafi's forces made shifts in tactics so that they would disguise their movements and position themselves near civilians to complicate targeting. On April 7, US Africa Command Commander General Carter Ham warned that pro-Gaddafi forces 'now operate largely in civilian vehicles. And when those vehicles are intermixed with the opposition forces, it's increasingly difficult to discern which is which. Secondly, we have seen an increase tactic by the regime forces to put their military vehicles adjacent to civilian aspects...which would result in significant civilian casualties through the strike of those assets'.⁴⁵ The opposition force was definitely not a match for the regime force in terms of both the tactical and operational wisdom. General Carter Ham realised earlier that 'The regime still vastly overmatches opposition forces militarily. The regime possesses the capability to roll them back very quickly. Coalition air power is the major reason that has not happened.'⁴⁶ This disparity between pro- and anti-Gaddafi forces had complicated coalition air strike operations, resulting in a stalemate or a more protracted war.⁴⁷

Although the US had made its decision to substantially scale down its participation in Libya, the prediction that Libyan rebels' gains would probably be reversed raised a question as to how the US should retreat, especially to whether it was necessary to arm the rebels as the US was transferring the Libyan mission to NATO. Hence, although publicly, President Obama had expressed his willingness to 'significantly ramp down' US commitment in coming days, he also stressed that he was still weighting up what to do. His hesitation in arming Libyan rebels increased due to the fact that UN Security Council resolutions authorising the air campaign in Libya did

⁴⁵ Testimony of US AFRICOM Commander General Carter Ham, Senate Armed Services Committee, 7 April 2011.

⁴⁶ Kareem Fahim and David D. Kirkpatrick (2011) 'Rebel Advance Halted Outside Gaddafi's Hometown', *The New York Times*, 28 March.

⁴⁷ Oren Dorell (2011).

not permit individual countries to arm the rebels, and that, thus far, France was the only nation that had said it intended to supply arms to the anti-Gaddafi forces.⁴⁸ In Washington, the unified position of Robert Gates and Hillary Clinton appeared to dull a debate within the administration over the merits of America's supplying weapons to the rebels, a disparate, little-known group. Gates emphasised, 'What the opposition needs as much as anything right now is some training, some command and control and some organisation. It is pretty much a pick-up ballgame at this point.' Then he continued, providing training and weapons 'is not a unique capability for the United States, and as far as I am concerned, somebody else can do that'.⁴⁹ On this issue, Hillary Clinton sided with Gates, though they had disagreed with each other even on whether to intervene in Libya at the very beginning. One of the reasons why Mrs Clinton was cautious about arming the rebels was 'because of the unknowns' about who they were and whether they might have links to Al-Qaeda.⁵⁰ But at the same time, she also emphasised that UN resolutions in fact allowed for the 'legitimate transfer of arms' to the rebels should any country wish to do so.⁵¹ In the Congressional testimony on March 31, Gates and chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen argued that, over time, Gaddafi's advantage could be erased by continued military pressure, thereby the US was unlikely to arm Libyan rebels.⁵²

Based on the actual performance of the opposition groups, it would be irresponsible for the coalition to approve any of them to deal with the post-war nation-building tasks. But the task would become much easier for the US if it could offer foreign political recognition to one of the opposition groups. By doing that, it would avoid binding the US and other NATO members to the unknown future. The lesson learned from Afghanistan and Iraq—that anti-US and anti-NATO sentiments might arise after

⁴⁸ On March 31, 2011, the Secretary General of NATO Anders Fogh Rasmussen told reporters in Stockholm that he believed that the UN Security Council resolutions authorising the air campaign in Libya did not permit individual countries to arm the rebels. But there was considerable disagreement within the military alliance, including from the US, which took the position that the resolutions did in fact allow arming them. See Elisabeth Bumiller and Thom Shanker (2011); Robert Naiman (2011) 'No Fly-Zone Was a Diplomatic Thing to Get the Arabs on Board', *Just Foreign Policy*, 1 April.

⁴⁹ Elisabeth Bumiller and Thom Shanker (2011)

⁵⁰ Ibid. and Helene Cooper and Steven Lee Myers (2011) 'Obama Takes Hard Line With Libya after Shift by Clinton', *The New York Times*, 18 March. Also see Hillary Clinton's memoir: *Hard Choices*, pp. 363-415.

⁵¹ Oliver Wright and Nigel Morris (2011) 'Clinton: UN Resolution Gives US Authority to Arm Libyan Rebels', *The Independent*, 30 March.

⁵² Daniel Dombey (2011). Elisabeth Bumiller and Thom Shanker (2011).

the war—suggested that no outsider should be too deeply involved in a regional conflict. The most acceptable choice for those who sought an exit strategy after their accomplishment of the R2P to avert humanitarian disasters and protect innocent civilians referred to letting the people in the region to decide their own country's destination and remaining generous to offer support when needed. Thus, after the US scaled down its commitment to Libya on the battlefield, the Obama administration devoted itself to shoulder the responsibility of selecting a qualified opposition group as the hope of Libya.

Prior to the 2011 uprising, most opposition movements in Libya were related to Islamists, royalists and secular nationalists, decreasing the effectiveness due to their ideological differences and inner-rivalry. The current round of opposition activities had arisen in response to Libya's reintegration to the international community and a broader debate over political reform in the Arab World. In both July 2005 and March 2008, opposition groups in exile such as the National Alliance, the Libyan National Movement, the National Libyan Salvation Front, and the Islamist Rally held two conferences with the title of 'National Conference for the Libyan Opposition' in London, calling for the removal of Gaddafi and the establishment of a transitional government.⁵³ The opposition movement was then motivated by regional protests, extending quickly to win worldwide attention in early 2011. Among all these opposition groups involved in the Libyan war, the Transitional National Council (TNC) seemed to be the least criticised on grounds of disorganisation or incapability. Another well-known opposition group that could compete with the TNC in capability was the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG). However, these Islamists were often accused of using violence as a means to overthrow Gaddafi, which might pose threat to the regional security at the same time.

In addition, considering the key elements the US valued, including the identities and backgrounds of various opposition groups, the military capabilities of anti-Gaddafi forces, and the rationale, intentions, and goals of opposition supporters, the TNC was preferable as it basically met US minimum requirement. Established in February, the

⁵³ May Youssef (2005) 'Anti-Gaddafists Rally in London', *Al Ahram Weekly (Cairo)*, No. 749, 30 June-6 July; OSC Report GMP20080329825012, 'Libyan Opposition Groups Meet in London To Reiterate Commitment To Save Libya', 29 March 2008.

TNC had claimed since the outbreak of regional protests to represent all areas of the country and seek foreign political recognition and material support. In order to gain both domestic and international support, TNC chairman Mustafa Abdeljalil who declared he had evidence that Gaddafi ordered the terrorist attack on Pan Am Flight 103 in February, laid out the Council's vision for an inclusive approach for a post-Gaddafi political transition, which helped the Council gain credibility and legitimacy: 'As soon as the regime falls, we will have six or seven months to call elections. Until then, we will represent all international agreements. After the elections, everything will be left in the hands of the new leaders. We will leave. None of the current members of the Council will run in the elections.'⁵⁴

Domestic mobilisation was achieved through a series of TNC statements that drew a nicer blueprint of future Libya for those aspiring citizens. On March 22, a Council statement reiterated the group's aspirations and appeals to assure its legitimacy: 'The TNC is committed to...build a constitutional democratic civil state based on the rule of law, respect for human rights and the guarantee of equal rights and opportunities for all its citizens.' It further stressed that 'Libya will become a state...that is responsive to its citizen's needs, delivers basic services effectively, and creates an enabling environment for a thriving private sector in an open economy to other markets around the world.'⁵⁵ The rhetoric became more convincing after the release of another statement titled 'A vision on a democratic Libya' on March 29. It stated that the TNC recognised its 'obligation' to 'draft a national constitution that...establishes legal, political, civil, legislative, executive and judicial institutions', to 'maintain a constitutional civil and free state by upholding intellectual and political pluralism and the peaceful transfer of power', and to 'guarantee and respect the freedom of expression through media, peaceful protests, demonstrations and sit-ins and other means of communication'.⁵⁶

On the other hand, *international recognition* was also realised though consuming more time compared with the acquisition of public support within Libya. Gaddafi

⁵⁴ OSC Report EUP20110311178003, 'Libyan Rebel Leader Accuses EU of Worrying More About Oil Than Libyans' Lives', 10 March 2011. David Gritten (2011) 'Key figures in Libya's rebel council', *BBC News*, 10 March.

⁵⁵ 'The Interim Transitional National Council Statement', 22 March 2011.

⁵⁶ 'Interim National Council: A vision of a Democratic Libya', 29 March 2011.

accused the TNC of having a regional separatist agenda in mind and of serving as a front for Al-Qaeda. In response, the TNC issued a statement on counter-terrorism on March 30, affirming 'its strong condemnation and its commitment to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations' and emphasising 'its full commitment to the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions on Counter-Terrorism'.⁵⁷ Owing to the firm stance to 'join and commit to all international conventions and protocols relating to Counter-Terrorism', the TNC successfully put off doubts and fears about 'who they were and whether they might have links to Al-Qaeda'.⁵⁸ Moreover, Mahmoud Jibril, the foreign affairs representative of the TNC, had travelled around Europe and the Middle East since early March working to secure international recognition of and support for the TNC, during which he firstly met with the French President Nicolas Sarkozy and then Hillary Clinton. As the first head of state to meet with insurgent leaders, Sarkozy made France the first country to recognise Libya's rebel leadership in the eastern city of Benghazi.⁵⁹ This move put Paris ahead of other European capitals that had been seeking ways of supporting the rebels in their goal of overthrowing Gaddafi. France's Foreign Secretary Alain Juppe urged allies in the EU to follow his country's example. Britain and Germany, though stuck to the principle that their practice was to recognise states, not governments, were encouraged to call the rebels 'valid interlocutors with whom we wish to work closely'.⁶⁰

On the other side, the meeting between Mr Jibril and Hillary Clinton, which was 'the highest-level contact between the administration and the increasingly disorganised forces battling troops loyal to Mr Gaddafi', achieved little in that it only 'reflected the Obama administration's struggle over how much support it would, or could, provide

⁵⁷ 'Statement of the Transitional National Council on Counter-Terrorism', 30 March 2011.

⁵⁸ The discussion about the 'doubts and fears' was addressed in the previous section. The concern about Libyan rebels was shared by most government officials including Robert Gates, Hillary Clinton, and some congressmen. See Oliver Wright and Nigel Morris (2011), Daniel Dombey (2011), and Elisabeth Bumiller and Thom Shanker (2011).

⁵⁹ Alan Cowell and Steven Erlanger (2011) 'France Becomes First Country to Recognise Libyan Rebels', *The New York Times*, 10 March.

⁶⁰ 'A Country in Meltdown: Now Medics Flee Libyan Hospitals as Gaddafi Ramps up the Attacks on Resurgent Opposition', *The Daily Mail*, 11 March 2011. Normally, EU countries say they recognise states, not governments, but the European Parliament has advocated recognition of the rebel leadership in Benghazi. See Alan Cowell and Steven Erlanger (2011). Germany even decided to wade into the crisis with an order that they would freeze the Libyan assets, which the finance ministry in Berlin said were worth 'billions'. See 'Germany Freezes Billions in Libyan Assets: Ministry', *EU Business*, 10 March 2011.

to the rebels'.⁶¹ Although appeals to President Obama to recognise the TNC as 'the sole legitimate governing authority in Libya' had been made as early as on March 15 when Senator John McCain (R-AZ) introduced Senate Resolution 102, the TNC was still denied by the majority as a reliable actor. The US Vice Admiral Bill Gortney once mentioned that 'the opposition is not well organised, and it is not a very robust organisation'. But, as he underlined, the US 'would like a much better understanding of the opposition'.⁶² Hence, to broaden US knowledge of the TNC, Obama appointed Secretary Clinton as a liaison to the TNC. She was permitted to engage in regular discussions with the TNC regarding its plans for a political process, its timetable for implementation and the role of the international community in supporting the transition.

With US knowledge of the opposition group improving, the administration decided to drawdown 'up to \$25 million in commodities and services from any agency of the US government for Libyan groups, such as the Transitional National Council, to support efforts to protect civilians and civilian-populated areas under threat of attack in Libya'.⁶³ At the same time, the UK and Qatar co-chaired the first meeting of the Libya Contact Group on April 14, during which an agreement on formulating a mechanism to provide financial assistance to the TNC was reached.⁶⁴ Furthermore, Qatar, Maldives, Italy, Kuwait, Gambia formally recognised the TNC as the legitimate representative of the Libyan people by the end of April, increasing Gaddafi's isolation and eroding his influence. The Obama administration did not make its announcement of recognition until July 15, but Hillary Clinton had clarified earlier that the US would recognise the TNC as the legitimate interlocutor for the Libyan people at a time when the Gaddafi regime lost all legitimacy to rule, based on the trust in the TNC that it promised to 'pursue democratic reform that is inclusive

⁶¹ Steven Lee Myers (2011) 'Clinton Meets in Paris With Libyan Rebel Leader', *The New York Times*, 14 March. 'Clinton Meets Libyan Opposition Figure Mahmoud Jibril', *BBC News*, 15 March 2011. Before the meeting with Mahmoud Jibril, Hillary Clinton met with French President Nicolas Sarkozy, who 'urged the United States to support international military intervention to stop Gaddafi's advance toward the rebel stronghold of Benghazi in eastern Libya'. However, she was not convinced. Also see Hillary Clinton's memoir: *Hard Choices*, pp. 363-365.

⁶² Christopher M. Blanchard (2011) 'Libya: Unrest and US Policy', *CRS Report for Congress*, 29 March, p. 11.

⁶³ President Obama (2011) 'Memorandum on Drawdown of Commodities and Services to Support Efforts to Protect Civilians and Civilian-Populated Areas Under Threat of Attack in Libya', 26 April.

⁶⁴ The Libya Contact Group represented more than 20 countries and the UN, NATO, EU, Organisation of the Islamic Conference, Gulf Cooperation Council and Arab League.

geographically and politically, and uphold Libya's international obligations and to disburse funds in a transparent manner, to address the humanitarian and other needs of the Libyan people'.⁶⁵ This recognition permitted the US to unfreeze certain Libyan assets in US banks, and the TNC was then allowed to use them.

Choosing one reliable opposition group to shoulder the post-war nation-building responsibility became the major task the US needed to accomplish during its 'leading from behind' period. The Transitional National Council finally came to the fore due to confirmation of its identity as an organisation representing all Libyan people to achieve real freedom and democracy. Persuaded by such assurance after fully understanding the regional opposition group, the US found its exit strategy to be a 'win-win' option that avoided deeper NATO involvement in the post-war nation-building mission on one hand and produced more respect and legitimacy for the TNC to govern Libya on the other. It was true that the US fulfilled another tough task, but was it convincing to say that the US transferred the Libyan mission to NATO only because of the 'more important, more urgent' task—to find a qualified regional group to shoulder nation-building responsibility? Rarely people would agree, so why did the US 'retreat' so fast? What was the real intention behind this move?

7.5 The shifts in US decision-making

Cited as a crucial factor that often influenced policy-making process, domestic pressure was obviously worth considering. In the case of Libya, displeasure from the Congress criticising the President's insufficient consultation peaked. Prior to the start of US military operations, some members of the Congress had frequently expressed their concerns about limited consultation between the President and the Congress with regard to the rationale, timing, authorisation, goals, costs, and implications of the US participation in Libya. For example, Republican Senator Richard Lugar (R-IN), doubting that the US interests would be served by imposing a no-fly zone over Libya, emphasised that 'If the Obama administration is contemplating this step, however, it should begin by seeking a declaration of war against Libya that would allow for a full

⁶⁵ Hillary Clinton (2011) 'Remarks by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton' 15 July.

Congressional debate on the issue.’⁶⁶ Some congressmen even admonished the administration, saying it had gone to war without seeking Congressional authorisation.⁶⁷ In addition, hearings held on the Libya issue also revealed different opinions in terms of the imperativeness to intervene, the benefits and costs, the need to use military forces, and the likelihood that terrorists would push the current unrest forward to threaten international security as a whole. However, though doubters continued to call for further consultation and clarity on a number of specific questions, such as the metrics, goals, funding, and command, they were unable to alter the major view prevailing in the Congress that immediate steps to implement a no-fly zone in Libya should be supported and a comprehensive US strategy to achieve the removal of Gaddafi should be developed. The first round of Congressional queries about the Libya issue temporarily subsided after President Obama wrote a letter to congressional leaders in response to Republican House Speaker John Boehner’s questions. But there was some additional information the President did not provide at that time, leading to the second round of Congressional queries seeking consultation on the US military participation in Libya.

On June 3, the House of Representatives passed by a vote of 268-145 House Resolution 292, calling for the President to answer critical questions from the Congress within two weeks about military operations in Libya and provide a justification for not seeking authorisation of force as required under the War Powers Resolution. Otherwise, the President should ‘free our nation from a muddled operation that proceeds without a specific goal or exit strategy’, as Congressman Tim Murphy stated.⁶⁸ Criticising the President for not responding to the question about whether the Office of Legal Counsel supported the White House’s extraordinary legal basis for ongoing military operations in Libya, John Boehner upgraded tensions between the President and the Congress. Republican Congressman Mac Thornberry who also served as Vice Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, doubled the pressure on the President by stating ‘I believe that it was a mistake to become involved in Libya, and I believe that the President should have sought the approval of

⁶⁶ Justin Logan (2011) ‘Lugar on Libya’, *CATO at Library*, 15 March.

⁶⁷ Elisabeth Bumiller and Thom Shanker (2011).

⁶⁸ ‘Congress Says President Obama Must Meet Timeline on Questions About Libya’, *US Fed News*, 3 June 2011.

Congress to engage our military before taking action.’ On the same day, House Republican Policy Committee Chairman Tom Price released another statement that shared the same tone as Mac Thornberry: ‘When deploying military force the President must demonstrate a consistent, responsible level of leadership, provide a clear justification in line with America’s national security interests, and consult with Congress. President Obama has not done so.’⁶⁹

So far, almost all significant voices against the President’s decision to intervene in Libya militarily had come from Republicans, thus, some people argued that there was no need for the President to take Congressional pressure seriously, because this disharmony originated from party tensions. However, results of a poll done by University of Iowa Hawkeye showed a different picture: Americans were split on support for the intervention, but that divide did not fall along party lines. To be specific, Democrats and Republicans expressed similar views on the Libya intervention: 36% of Democrats and 38% of Republicans supported the move, while 42% of Democrats and 38% of Republicans opposed it.⁷⁰ Bearing this in mind, the administration felt quite disturbed when the House voted to bar funding to support the freedom fighters in Libya on July 7. However, based on the long-time trust that all Americans would stand together to ensure that no wrong message was sent to both Gaddafi and those fighting for freedom and democracy in Libya no matter how intense the internal debate was, the President was confident that he could eliminate the Congressional frustration gradually. Actually the Obama administration had consulted extensively with the Congress about US engagement in Libya since early March: it had testified in over 10 hearings, participated in over 30 Member staff briefings; conducted dozens of calls with individual Members; and provided 32 status updates via e-mail to over 1,600 Congressional staff.⁷¹ It was understandable that the administration would take actions more prudently when facing great pressure from the Congress, but was the Congress the reason why the US handed over the Libya mission to NATO and chose to stand behind its allies? If we took Afghanistan and Iraq as comparison, ‘domestic pressure’ would be automatically denied as the core

⁶⁹ ‘Chairman Price Issues Statement on Libya Resolutions’, *US Fed News*, 24 June 2011.

⁷⁰ ‘University of Iowa Hawkeye Poll: Support for Airstrikes in Libya Split—But Not Along Party Lines’, *US Fed News*, 19 May 2011.

⁷¹ ‘United States Activities in Libya’, *Foreign Policy*, 15 June 2011.

reason of US 'retreat' from Libya, because the US encountered similar situations in all these cases in terms of the pressure from Congress but the US only performed differently in Libya. There might be thousands of explanations for the US move, but domestic pressure alone is not entirely persuasive.

The real intention behind the US move was far more hidden and complicated. One guess would be that the US intended to use Libya to teach its European allies that if they wanted to enjoy the right to deal with such issues like Libya by themselves, they should also get themselves prepared to shoulder all the relevant responsibilities and burdens. From the perspective of the US, handing the Libya mission to European countries would be a 'never-lose' strategy. On one hand, if its European allies won the war efficiently, the future transatlantic cooperation would be more promising due to Europe's abundant capability that withstands the test, hence the US would be enabled to require its allies to shoulder more responsibilities and burdens. On the other hand, if those European countries failed, it would be a great chance for them to better understand what tough days the US has gone through in terms of previous crisis management, therefore, the US could expect more assistance from its allies in the future. However, some critics mocked 'leading from behind' as a high-sounding excuse, considering the US approach to be a reflection of weakness. They even proposed a harsh question about the President: 'Has he, at any point in his presidency so far, demonstrated real political courage?'⁷² Mitt Romney stated in March 2011, 'In the past, America has been feared sometimes, has been respected, but today, that America is seen as being weak. We are following the French into Libya.'⁷³ Republican Senators John McCain (R-AZ) and Lindsey Graham (R-SC) even criticised America's limited use of airpower in the fight to overthrow Gaddafi. They expressed 'regret that this success was so long in coming due to the failure of the US to employ the full weight of our air power' regarding the end of Gaddafi regime in Libya.⁷⁴

To clarify, the US pursuit of 'leading from behind' did not necessarily mean that the

⁷² 'The Courage Factor: Has Barack Obama Ever Been Brave? Perhaps More Pertinently, Will He Ever Be?', *The Economist*, 17 March 2011.

⁷³ Jake Tapper (2011) 'Where Is Mitt Romney on Libya?', *ABC News*, 20 October.

⁷⁴ 'Statement by Senators McCain and Graham on End of the Gaddafi Regime in Libya', 21 August 2011.

US wished to stand aside and watch European countries fighting against Gaddafi. To help European allies grow up as responsible actors, the US left the initiative to them while they prepared certain assistance behind the scenes in case of unexpected setbacks. In fact, 'NATO's European members were highly dependent on US military help to keep going. America provided about three-quarters of the aerial tankers without which the strike fighters, mostly flying from bases in Italy, could not have reached their targets.' Moreover, 'America also provided most of the cruise missiles that degraded Colonel Gaddafi's air defences sufficiently for the no-fly zone to be rapidly established.' It was the US that provided fresh supplies 'when stocks of precision-guided weapons ran low after only a couple of months'.⁷⁵ Further, the US continued to provide nearly 70% of the coalition's intelligence capabilities and a majority of its refuelling assets even after the US had turned over the full command and control responsibility to NATO. In a word, it was the US that provided critical assets and capabilities that other NATO members either did not possess or possessed in very limited numbers.

People who criticised America's relatively relaxed response to the conflict did not really aim to condemn or warn of US weakness, quite the opposite; they trusted US capability but mistrusted US willingness to apply its resources to the Libyan operation. The assumption behind the question why the US felt reluctant to intervene and chose 'leading from behind' willingly was that the US did not really want to see Gaddafi leave. In other words, to achieve regime change in Libya was not a priority for the US. But it was obviously untrue. President Obama initially confined the operation in Libya a strictly humanitarian one, stating that 'The United States is not going to deploy ground troops into Libya. And we are not going to use force to go beyond a well-defined goal—specifically, the protection of civilians in Libya,' yet he changed to stress on the need to achieve regime change as time went by.⁷⁶ In April, the leaders of the US, Britain and France published a joint statement in newspapers worldwide emphasising that regime change in Libya must take place in order to secure 'a genuine transition from dictatorship to an inclusive constitutional process can really begin, led by a new generation of leaders'.⁷⁷ The allies altogether declared 'Gaddafi must go and

⁷⁵ 'NATO After Libya: A Troubling Victory', *The Economist*, 3 September 2011.

⁷⁶ President Obama (2011) 'Remarks by the President on the Situation in Libya', 18 March.

⁷⁷ 'Gaddafi must go for good: France, US, UK', *The Times of India*, 15 April 2011. 'Libya: Obama,

go for good', though Gaddafi offered in May a ceasefire with the rebels. NATO rejected Gaddafi firmly because his offer would only end the humanitarian crisis and advance negotiations, but could not guarantee regime change. As of September, these two goals of averting the humanitarian crisis and toppling the Gaddafi regime had been both realised.

Some critics argued that two goals were attained for the price of one, and the mission creep would result in deleterious effects to the post-war Libya, reducing the possibility of the emergence of a stable democratic government. These concerns were proved reasonable when a 100-plus page Amnesty International report was released in September, which found that rebels fighting to topple Libyan leader Gaddafi committed unlawful killings and torture. Opposition supporters 'unlawfully killed' more than a dozen Gaddafi loyalists and security officials between April and early July.⁷⁸ If the US could not avoid being blamed for the mission creep, it should be blamed for its failure to convey mission expansion timely and clearly, but not for its unwillingness to see Gaddafi leave. Compared with the war in Afghanistan, mission creep in Libya was not surprising at all. President Obama claimed in March 2009 that the US, 'have a clear and focused goal: to disrupt, dismantle and defeat Al-Qaeda in Pakistan and Afghanistan and to prevent their return to either country in the future'.⁷⁹ But later in October 2009, the administration narrowly defined the plan as a limited one to 'destroy Al-Qaeda's leadership, its infrastructure, and its capability' based on its reassessment of Afghan Taliban, 'which the administration has begun to define as an indigenous group that aspires to reclaim territory and rule the country but does not express ambitions of attacking the United States'.⁸⁰ Over time, however, the administration expanded its purpose again to include defeating the Taliban and undertaking nation-building tasks. Why did the US get entangled in mission creep? Could the US prevent the recurrence of the problem? The answer would be disappointing because so far no good suggestion had truly helped the US get out of the dilemma between idealistic and normative approaches. Idealistically, the US

Cameron and Sarkozy Vow Gaddafi Must Go', *BBC News*, 15 April 2011.

⁷⁸ 'The Battle for Libya: Killings, Disappearances and Torture', *Amnesty International*, September 2011.

⁷⁹ President Obama (2009) 'Remarks By The President On A New Strategy For Afghanistan And Pakistan', 27 March.

⁸⁰ Peter Baker and Eric Schmitt (2009) 'Afghan War Debate Now Leans to Focus on Al Qaeda', *The New York Times*, 7 October.

believed that all people, if free to choose, would 'naturally' prefer a democratic government, a free and equal society, rule of law. These 'common values' led the US to continue to help others 'catch up with history'. But normatively, 'one could not achieve narrow security goals (i.e., defeating Al-Qaeda) without also engaging in nation-building...one cannot win wars against insurgencies merely by using military forces, but must also win the hearts and minds of the population by doing good deeds for them (e.g., building roads, clinics, schools, etc.)'.⁸¹ Nora Bensahel took the same view, saying that once having intervened to prevent humanitarian disaster, it would be hard to stop extending the mission to regime change, because potential humanitarian catastrophe would come back immediately.⁸² The difficulty in suspending mission expansion from both strategic and humanitarian perspectives would be inestimable, given that once intervention started, there would be nothing to prevent the regime from making humanitarian crisis even worse to compensate for the fact that resistance had been stronger. As noted by the President, 'the growing instability in Libya could ignite wider instability in the Middle East, with dangerous consequences to the national security interests of the United States', hence the US should maintain its longstanding commitment to promote international peace and security while increasing the scope and effectiveness of its actions towards the Gaddafi regime when necessary.⁸³ Based on these considerations, the US had to not only intervene, but also intervene 'deeply' enough. To sum up, both the suspicion on US unwillingness to participate in the Libya operation and the argument that Congressional pressure forced the US to step back, lacked roots to explain the US decision on 'leading from behind'. By ruling out those possibilities, the following chapter will address in detail US decision-making on Libya, including why the US hesitated to intervene at the very beginning and why the US transferred the Libyan mission to NATO and started 'leading from behind'.

⁸¹ Amitai Etzioni (2012) 'The Lessons of Libya', *Military Review*, January-February, p. 48.

⁸² Nora Bensahel (2006) 'Mission Not Accomplished: What Went Wrong with Iraq Reconstruction', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 3, pp. 453-473.

⁸³ David Jackson (2011) 'Obama Formally Notifies Congress of Libya Action', *USA Today*, 22 March.

Chapter 8: NATO's Engagement in Libya—The US Policy-Making Process

8.1 Background to the US involvement in international intervention

8.1.1 From humanitarian intervention to 'Responsibility to Protect'

The category of security problems has changed ever since the end of the Cold War, requiring a redefinition of the concept of international intervention. The big issue that stands in the way is that of state sovereignty. That is also why it took months for the international community to respond to Kosovo, for example. Kosovo was a province of Serbia, which was a sovereign state. For that reason, Russia and China, two states that had always been very protective of the concept of state sovereignty, opposed the intervention in Kosovo and in the Balkans more broadly. Thus the difficulty in achieving a consensus resulted in two competing norms: state sovereignty, and human rights and protections of minorities from violence. The tension between these two norms did not become knotty until a series of tragedies shocked the world due to the lack of either a UN authorisation or sufficient responsive capabilities.

In 1991, the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan firstly reflected on the dilemma of humanitarian intervention, warning that in the future the international community should not stand by and allow terrible crimes against humanity, given the UN failures in authorising effective responsive actions in Rwanda, Srebrenica and Kosovo. He sparked the debate between state sovereignty and human rights by developing the dichotomy of 'two notions of sovereignty: one for states, another for individuals'.¹ The conclusion of Annan's series of speeches in the General Assembly emphasised that when the sovereignty of states and the sovereignty of individuals fell into dispute, the international community should think hard about how far it would go to defend the former over the latter.² Advocating that sovereignty should no longer be absolute,

¹ Kofi Annan (1999) 'Two notions of Sovereignty', *The Economist*, 18 September.

² Secretary General Addresses International Peace Academy Seminar on the Responsibility to Protect,

Annan appealed to the international community to take the 'Responsibility to Protect' (R2P) if a country was unwilling or unable to protect its people from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. Although the adoption of the 'emerging norm that there is a collective Responsibility to Protect' had raised some political costs, heads of state and government finally endorsed the principle of 'R2P' at the 2005 World Summit, promising that they 'accept that responsibility and will act in accordance with it'.³ 'The US, supported in this endeavour by China and Russia, successfully whittled away the Council's responsibility from an obligation to act to 'stand ready' to act should the prevailing circumstances permit.'⁴ Some commentators, such as Todd Lindberg, hailed it as a 'revolution in consciousness in international affairs', which gave all states a responsibility to uphold and protect basic human rights regardless of where they were violated.⁵

President H. W. Bush once characterised his single term as a new era 'where United Nations, freed from Cold War stalemate, is poised to fulfil the historical vision of its founders. A world in which freedom and respect for human rights find a home among all nations'.⁶ But the reality sees the UN, for one, would not emerge as a supranational overseer of international security. In light of what happened in the 1990s, there is a huge necessity for the international community to respond substantively not just to the abuses of power, repressions or humanitarian crisis, but also to all kinds of crimes against humanity. However, the impetus for transforming humanitarian intervention to 'R2P' is not simply the sympathy for those tragedies that occurred due to the lack of response. More attention should be paid to the reasons why the international community was deadlocked about whether to intervene to prevent humanitarian crises from worsening. There is a number of ways to cut into that question, but one persuasive argument should address either the problem of unwillingness or the problem of inability. The former, which entangles fewer puzzles, can always be resolved if the action is legitimised. However, even after the international community

UN document SG/SM/8125, 15 February 2002.

³ Report of the Secretary General, In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All, UN document A/59/2005, 21 March 2005, p. 35, para. 135. UNGA, 2005 World Summit Outcome Document, A/RES/60/1, 20 September 2005, para. 138.

⁴ Alex J. Bellamy (2006) 'Whither the Responsibility to Protect? Humanitarian Intervention and the 2005 World Summit', *Ethnic and International Affairs*, Vol. 20, Issue 2, p. 167.

⁵ Todd Lindberg (2005) 'Protect the People', *The Washington Times*, 27 September.

⁶ John Dumbrell (2009) *Clinton's Foreign Policy: Between the Bushes, 1992-2000*, London: Routledge.

has got a UN authorisation that offers the intervention a legal basis, the community could still find its feet stopped if no pragmatic support really exists. Thus the latter problem entails what the UN is capable of doing. Putting aside its structural constraints that five permanent members of the Security Council rarely reach an agreement on international intervention, the lack of military capability can also prevent the UN from authorising effective measures. Therefore what the states found was that the hopes for the UN were exaggerated and unrealistic.

After Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in August 1990, the unusual combination of circumstances made it possible for the UN Security Council to take the lead symbolically and politically in passing a series of resolutions which required Saddam to make a series of concessions, starting with a complete withdrawal from Kuwait, making restitutions, heading back to presidencies, and paying back what he had done. In this case, Russia did not apply its veto due to the friendly relations between George H. W. Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev, and between the Secretary of State James Baker and the Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze. Thereafter the UN Resolution 678 was passed in late November 1990, offering the US legitimacy to lead an international coalition. Though Saddam ultimately implemented the withdrawal from Kuwait after the rapid defeat, it was clear that the following story would not be satisfactory without the US-led coalition, given the fact that the UN had no standing forces. In addition, the case of Kuwait was one of few exceptions in the history of the UN Security Council to reach a consensus on international interventions. In fact, disagreements among five permanent members always ruined those cases. That concern was again proved to be reasonable in Bosnia and Rwanda, where the UN was completely absent and incapable. It failed in both cases. Since the UN lacks capability, both politically and militarily, to shoulder the 'R2P', then who can? In July 1995, after the massacre in Bosnia, the Clinton administration finally acted to lead the Alliance against the Serbs. When it came to the late 1990s in Kosovo, once more the Clinton administration went to NATO. Apparently it was the objective dilemma that pushed NATO to do these missions where the UN was unwilling or unable to take actions.

8.1.2 Were US interests fundamentally transformed by the end of the Cold War?

However, with NATO transforming into a more appropriate actor to deal with regional crisis, other countries began to accuse the US of using NATO as an instrument of extra-UN unilateral power. The accusation became more intense when President Clinton said that 'America remains the indispensable nation' in 1996 in a speech explaining the rationale behind NATO's intervention in Bosnia. Believing 'there are times when only America can make a difference between war and peace, between freedom and repression, between hope and fear' on one hand, President Clinton, on the other hand emphasised that the US could not take on all the world's burdens and become its policeman.⁷ At the same time, there were general hopes that Europe could play a larger role in the challenges, but the Balkans became a terrible setback for Europe because it was unable to stop the crisis. The Europeans were working very hard on a common security policy in the 1990s, expecting to provide not alternative but part of crisis managements in the evolutionary post-Cold War world. However, the European Union, as a regional body, did not work well in the Balkans, so it ultimately turned its attention more towards NATO.

In the years since the end of the Cold War when there were urgent and deadly problems, the US engagements did not necessarily mean that the US was the world policeman or putting 'boots on the ground', but unless the US was engaged in a significant way, the likelihood of winning a war would be very low. Robert Lieber believed that the world from which the US disengaged would be a more dangerous world, a less prosperous world, one with less regional security, less human rights, less democratization, and fewer international laws.⁸ Thus to scale down or to increase US international commitments entails questions of whether US interests were fundamentally transformed by the end of the Cold War; whether the US missed an opportunity, including by sustaining NATO, to push the post-Cold War transition as far as they might have gone, and whether the transformations were actually undermined by continuing with the Cold War frameworks like NATO. The other side of that debate was that the fundamental conflicts that shifted the Cold War were not

⁷ President Clinton (1996) 'Remarks to the Community in Detroit', 22 October.

⁸ Interview with Robert Lieber, Professor of Government and International Affairs at Georgetown University, 11 July 2012.

done when the Cold War ended. Russia and some other countries continued to pose strategic threats to the US, therefore NATO was served as an instrument to not only respond to those threats that continued but also integrate states existing in the Soviet Bloc into a more Western-oriented liberal international order. However, as Steven Heydemann said in an interview with the author, though it was true that the functions and the orientations of NATO had changed, the question of the extent to which the end of the Cold War had transformed the US strategic interests was also an important one to address.⁹

Historically US foreign policy has tended to swing between realism and liberal internationalism, yet the US final decision is not simply driven by either the realist or liberal internationalist approach. It may not be plausible to apply these two pure theories with a range of categories into any single decision-making process, because in actual political terms it is not obvious what distinguishes realists from liberal internationalists; nor do these two theories exhaust the opinion in both the mass and the legal level. What the US chose, as manifested in current interventions, 'is a versatile yet potentially contradictory policy approach that mixes realism and idealism'¹⁰. For example, in terms of international intervention, the US decision on whether to take actions results from mixed considerations, among which realism and liberal internationalism serve as two major dimensions. In this context, realism means if the US wants to intervene in regional crisis, it has to answer the question of whether this action truly serves US interest before carrying out the operation. On the other hand, from the perspective of liberal internationalism, the US always believes that it has the duty to help the other countries 'catch up with history' and share common values such as democracy, freedom, human rights. In the case of Libya, if the US decision to participate in the operation was based on the realists' considerations, what US interest did the Libyan mission serve? If the decision was a result of liberal internationalists' calculation, why not Somalia or Congo, where people were also suffering from humanitarian crisis the same as in Libya? And if the decision was driven by both approaches (which certainly would provide the US with more robust

⁹ Interview with Steven Heydemann, Senior Adviser for Middle East Initiatives at the United States Institute of Peace, 16 July 2012.

¹⁰ Luca Tardelli (2011) 'Obama's Interventions: Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya', *The United States After Unipolarity*, LSE Ideas SR009 December 2011, p. 22.

motivations), then why did the US still hesitate to intervene in Libya at the very beginning? Why did it take so long for the US to do something if it was consistent with the perception of the US global leadership or moral leadership?

The balance between self-interest and morality is not a question of one or the other. Frankly in most countries, there is no clear dividing line between interests and values all the time. Nora Bensahel believed that one of the reasons why the US pursued a lot of things that were in the liberal internationalist framework was because in some ways they benefitted US interests.¹¹ In reality, having a global system of peace and prosperity benefits the US in a lot of ways, in addition to being consistent with American values. Thus self-interest and morality do not always clash, but are linked with each other, given that transition channels exist between these two approaches. In the case of Libya, though realists who argued for a very limited US role in the international system, tried to persuade the administration that there were no direct, first-order US interests at stake in Libya, they were actually unable to affirm that all traditional interests were absent there. In fact, the concept of strategic interest has been broadened rather than narrowed, which becomes a double-edged sword, providing the US with more motivations to participate in a campaign on one hand while slowing down the US decision-making process on the other. This offers a general explanation of why the US hesitated to intervene in Libya at the very beginning and why it then changed its mind to join the operation later, but practically there are more factors interplay.

¹¹ Interview with Nora Bensahel, Deputy Director of Studies and Senior Fellow at the Centre for A New American Security, 16 July 2012.

8.2 Why did the US hesitate to intervene in Libya at the very beginning?

8.2.1 Low public enthusiasm for a third Middle East war

There were many arguments that tried to disconnect what was happening in Libya from US strategic interests. Firstly, public support was very low in the context of financial crisis and in particular the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Ambassador Kathleen Stephens believed that the American people understood that to retain a leadership role in the world, fundamentally the US needed to be strong and competitive in economy and infrastructure, therefore performing the Libyan mission would not be an acceptable choice among the mass.¹² In addition, considering both wars in Iraq and Afghanistan had become increasingly unpopular with most Americans, Robert Litwak argued that fatigue of the two wars and uncertainty about what the outcome would be in Libya were the main factors that decreased the administration's enthusiasm for getting involved in another Middle East war.¹³ Steven Heydemann also agreed that public tolerance for military engagement was quite low after ten years war in Iraq and Afghanistan, which produced a national fatigue for intervention.¹⁴

As Robert Litwak concluded, 'each intervention is affected by the previous intervention', providing either more motivation or more reluctance to participate in another campaign.¹⁵ The US, after the Gulf War, intervened in Somalia to provide humanitarian assistance, however, it turned out to be America getting involved in basically a civil war. The lesson of Somalia, as the famous movie *Black Hawk Down* implied, was that the US should never get involved in such a messy internal conflict again. Then Rwanda happened. Assuming that Rwanda would be similar to Somalia, the Clinton administration decided not to take any action. However, the Rwandan genocide went completely out of control, resulting in decades of criticism that the US

¹² Interview with Kathleen Stephens, US Ambassador to South Korea, 18 July 2012.

¹³ Interview with Robert Litwak, Vice President for Scholars and Director of international Security Studies at the Woodrow Wilson Centre, 10 July 2012.

¹⁴ Interview with Steven Heydemann.

¹⁵ Interview with Robert Litwak.

stood by while this major massacre was going on. What the US learned from Rwanda was to carry out plans rapidly to prevent the tragedy in the first place. Therefore when it came to the Balkans, the US quickly moved to Kosovo, which was implemented as a NATO operation. Since NATO operated on consensus meaning that any country could veto any proposed initiative, the efficiency of setting targets was reduced dramatically. Hence when Afghanistan took place, Washington decided to bypass NATO in order to avoid another troublesome Kosovo where European states were able to veto where NATO was going to bomb or not. The Taliban regime fell quickly in the case of Afghanistan, so when Iraq came along, there was a sense that it would also be easy to beat Saddam Hussein. This poor judgment led to a mistaken American decision to stay as an occupation force to create democracy in Iraq. Even though the US is out of Iraq now, it has spent a long time there trying to create a type of mono-ethnic, democratic country. Then Libya came at the time when the scar left by Iraq had not healed. As a result, the US was unwilling and unprepared to sink into another war immediately after Iraq, regardless of the costs and the lack of knowledge about the local politics. The progression of interventions, namely how an intervention is viewed through the previous intervention, affects the broader calculation on whether it is acceptable to carry out another operation.

In reality, not only current public opinion towards war, but also how the administration viewed a further military engagement, have been greatly influenced by the legacy of previous wars. Barack Obama is the president who campaigned on ending the wars in Iraq, on reaching out of the Muslim World, and on building a better relationship between the US and the Arab World, thus starting another war against an Arab Muslim country was seen as highly undesirable for the administration.¹⁶ Both Matthew Kroenig and Nora Bensahel emphasised that it would be politically dangerous for President Obama to announce the intervention, not only in terms of how it would be perceived but also how it would be perceived as getting the US involved in a third Middle East war.¹⁷ Even though France and Britain took

¹⁶ President Obama (2008) 'Obama's Speech on Iraq', *Council on Foreign Relations*, 19 March. President Obama (2008) 'Obama's Remarks on Iraq and Afghanistan', *The New York Times*, 15 July. 'Barack Obama and What He Said on the Iraq War', *The Telegraph*, 14 December 2011. President Obama (2010) 'Address to the Nation on the End of Combat Operations in Iraq', 31 August.

¹⁷ Interview with Nora Bensahel; interview with Matthew Kroenig, Stanton Nuclear Security Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, 17 July 2012.

the lead to declare war against Gaddafi, the Obama administration remained silent because its policy was extended at hand.

8.2.2 An American project or a European project?

Secondly, it was widely accepted that there were no direct, first-order US interests at stake in Libya, hence the US response to a state that imposed no threat to American people would not be necessary. Steven Heydemann supported this idea by saying that it was difficult to argue that Libya rose above the threshold that made it a vital strategic interest for the US.¹⁸ Thus 'Nowhere in the administration's public statements was there any assessment of US interests in Libya that would justify American military intervention'.¹⁹ In terms of hard-core national interests, as Christopher Chivvis mentioned, the US did not see Libya as attractive in the field of energy or gas, but the European allies were getting gas and oil from Libya through enormous contracts.²⁰ How the Libyan crisis had affected European countries' economic interests was evidenced by the increase of oil prices to their highest levels since the global financial crisis of 2008 due to Gaddafi's plan to end Libya's National Oil Corporation's (NOP) contracts with Western oil groups including oil giant BP.²¹ Furthermore, European security was more directly challenged because geographically Europe was closer to Libya, therefore potential refugees would flow across Mediterranean and destabilize the European governments and economies. With respect to this, Karim Mezran compared the US attitudes toward Iraq and Libya, concluding that the reason why the US was active in Afghanistan and passive in Libya was because Afghanistan was an American project while Libya was a European project.²² But, since the Libyan mission was related to European interests, how could the US avoid getting involved, given the intimate transatlantic relationship?

¹⁸ Interview with Steven Heydemann.

¹⁹ Martin Indyk, Kenneth Lieberthal and Michael O'Hanlon. (2012) *Bending History: Barack Obama's Foreign Policy*, Washington: Brookings Institution Press, p. 161.

²⁰ Interview with Christopher Chivvis, Senior Political Scientist at RAND, 16 July 2012.

²¹ Garry White (2011) 'BP's Contracts in Libya "Still Valid" Despite Turmoil', *The Telegraph*, 17 March. 'Libyan Leader Muammar Gaddafi Appears on State TV', *BBC News*, 22 February 2011. Although Gaddafi did not really replace Western oil groups with companies from Russia, India and China, his comments and the unrest in Libya did suspend BP's and Royal Dutch Shell's exploration programmes.

²² Interview with Karim Mezran, Senior Fellow at the Atlantic Council, 9 July 2012.

Theoretically, whether a mission is an American project or a European project depends on who is responding to the attack, but this definition is apparently inappropriate taking into account the narrow and limited basis. For example, Afghanistan was an American project in the sense that the US was responding to the attack, but it was also very international from the beginning in terms of the understanding of why Afghanistan mattered. The US got expressions of support from every country around the world that understood what happened on September 11, 2001 was an attack on the US and thereby a military response would be seen as self-defence. There were tremendous international involvements starting in January 2002, in view of a shared belief that reconstruction was necessary to prevent the disaster from happening again. It was true that the US was leading the military operation, yet the US also received remarkable support from other countries. Even Russia and China had openly expressed their support, regarding US military activity in Afghanistan as self-defence. In that sense, it would be unfair to define Afghanistan solely as an American project, and similarly, Libya should not be considered as a European project though no direct US interests were actually at stake. Putting aside the debate over whether Libya was a European project or an American project or an international project, there was a more important question to address: who should respond to it? Who would be the appropriate actor to take the 'R2P'? Would the UN members go there together? What about the EU and the Arab League? In fact, the possibility of these institutions using forces to resolve the Libyan crisis would be very low when taking into account the lack of a military guarantee. As a result, Libya witnessed a return to the consensus that NATO, rather than any other organisation, should continue to play an important role in terms of crisis management.

The first round of debate over the termination of institutionalised US support for European security was seriously raised in the period when President George H. W. Bush was in office. He called for spending cuts, which would eventually result in significant reductions in funding and force levels for NATO's conventional and nuclear forces. The possibility of NATO ceasing to exist seemed to be great at that moment, but the turning point finally came when wars in the Balkans broke out. Ambassador Kathleen Stephens talked about her personal experience of being in Yugoslavia at that time, saying that many people, Americans and others, who worked

on NATO affairs believed that NATO had no business getting involved in something like the Balkans. That was why it took so long for NATO or the US to make a decision to deal with the slaughter in the Balkans. But eventually 'NATO and the US came to a conclusion that if NATO was not going to act there, then where? Diplomacy did not work there, so what should we do?'²³ Therefore, NATO must go to the Balkans. Once NATO played a role in the post-Cold War period, NATO would continue to define and refine its missions, including not only to promote peaceful integration of Europe, but also to serve as an instrument of stability in other parts of the world. On the other hand, though agreeing with Kathleen that intervention in Kosovo was necessary, Charles Kupchan was not a supporter of NATO's participation in Libya. In the case of Kosovo, 'the risk of the spread of war to the southern Balkan Peninsula was real, and if the Albanians were driven out of Kosovo into Macedonia, Macedonia would have exploded, then Macedonia would have exploded Albania, Bulgaria and Greece'.²⁴ Kupchan believed that it would have been too harmful for NATO to watch the Balkans fall apart, because NATO's future, to some extent, has been determined at the end of the Cold War, whereas if NATO does not intervene in Libya, the perception of NATO will not be actually affected. Despite the concern that intervening in another Muslim country might turn out to be a disaster like Iraq and Afghanistan, the main reason why Kupchan opposed the intervention in Libya was because he saw no humanitarian emergency there that needed intervention: 'People were talking about 75,000 were killed in Benghazi, but if you actually looked at what happened, that was not a massacre.'²⁵ However, whether Libya went above the bar as a humanitarian emergency did not receive as much attention as Kosovo did. Francis Winters argued that the intervention in Kosovo was illegal due to the lack of UN authorisation.²⁶ But it was legitimate, according to Charles, because it enjoyed broad support in the core world opinion.²⁷ Libya was less controversial in terms of the legal basis, given that the UN Resolution 1970 and 1973 had been passed at the early stage. The following question would be where the legitimacy came from. Which operational form could make the Libyan mission legitimate? Since the Europeans

²³ Interview with Ambassador Kathleen Stephens.

²⁴ Interview with Charles Kupchan, Whitney Shepardson Senior Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, 17 July 2012.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Interview with Francis Winters, Professor of Ethnicity and International Affairs at Georgetown University, 12 July 2012.

²⁷ Interview with Charles Kupchan.

insisted on taking actions no matter how the other countries would judge on the basis of either self-interests or morality, should the Europeans, and only the Europeans, participate in the operation? Should the Americans join them? If so, should the US participate in a way of bilateral cooperation or through multilateral institutionalised alliance such as NATO?

Charles Kupchan characterised President Obama as ‘a multilateralist, but not an Atlanticist’ when Obama firstly came into office, whereas the President ‘turned into a multilateralist and an Atlanticist’ in the following years.²⁸ Initially President Obama believed that he could go out in the world and build partnerships, and perhaps even institutionalised partnerships with new partners such as the Chinese, the Brazilians, the Indians, and the Turks. Given the new distribution of power, President Obama expected that one day he could pick up the phone and call Ankara, saying ‘Let us go to save the Syrian people’, or call Beijing and say ‘Why do not Chinese troops and American troops go and intervene?’²⁹ Yet after a year of trying, he realised how difficult it would be to deal with those people. It seemed that the advent of Obama’s harmonious future would not come very soon. Hence by one and a half years into the Obama administration, the President finally admitted that the Atlantic Alliance might not be perfect, but it was the best thing going. ‘When the US needs help in the world, there is no better place to go than Europe.’³⁰ Conversely, if the US wants to keep Europe on board all the time, it should not abandon its allies when they need assistance from the US. Therefore, the consensus that NATO should continue to play a significant role in the international system defined the Libyan mission as at least a transatlantic project that should be accomplished by both the Europeans and the Americans. That was also why the US decided to transfer the Libyan mission to NATO at the end of March 2011: Libya was not simply either a European project or an American project.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

8.2.3 Pragmatic reasons

Whenever the US decides to intervene in a regional crisis, it knows that it has to do a large amount of the work, implementing most part of the campaign and investing ample resources, technologies, intelligences, surveillances, air-refuelling. Usually the US is not reluctant to take actions as long as it suspects that (potential) threats exist or US interests are at stake there. This assumption enables the US to play a dominant role in crisis management around the world, which also incidentally brings more responsibilities to the US at the same time. The pre-war estimation demonstrated that Libya would not be an exception in terms of resources spending. If the US, rather than France and Britain, took the lead in Libya, it would have provided the majority of forces as it did in the past to make it possible. But in the situation where the US had its forces committed in many other parts of the world, the recognition about what Libya would take for the US was uncertain. Dominique de Villepin, the French minister of Foreign Affairs, made a judgment prior to the invasion of Iraq, warning that intervention was not only about winning the campaign, but also about continuing with post-war peace-building tasks. 'The option of war might seem a priori to be the swiftest. But let us not forget that having won the war, one has to build peace. Let us not delude ourselves. This will be long and difficult because it will be necessary to preserve Iraq's unity and restore stability in a lasting way in a country and region harshly affected by the intrusion of force.'³¹ Nonetheless, Washington dismissed such prescient warnings. It soon saw Iraq becoming a miserable story. The lesson from Iraq, particularly with regard to the underestimated costs and time spent on that mission, highly constrained the Americans' tolerance for helping transform one more country like Iraq. Indeed, how could a country, with anticipation that the costs of war would be much higher than the benefits regardless of the necessity to join that war, agree to take actions concretely?

The US had sufficient reasons for not participating in the operation, resulting in much reluctance to do it in the first place. To be more pragmatic, Ambassador Kathleen Stephens quoted British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd's saying to explain why it

³¹ Dominique de Villepin (2003) 'Statement by Dominique de Villepin to the UNSC', *Foreign Policy*, 14 February 2003.

took so long for the US to take actions in Libya: 'Democracy always make us to act too late'.³² With respect to the way democracy tends to work, it is almost always difficult to make decisions when you have political leadership, attentions to public opinion, and vast interest groups to be considered. Robust debate helps achieve a better outcome, yet it is time-consuming in a second way. Thus fundamentally democracy takes time to make decisions, revealing the overall political climate on one hand and highlighting US reluctance to respond on the other.

Although many critics argued that the US apparently hesitated to intervene in Libya either from a theoretical or a pragmatic perspective, the fact was that it did not take so long compared with Bosnia, Kosovo or any other case. Ivo Daalder, the US Ambassador to NATO, underlined that the response to Libya was significantly more rapid than responses to crises in the past. When facing Gaddafi's launch of a brutal crackdown, 'the international community responded swiftly...In late February, Washington was the first country to cut off Gaddafi's funding, freezing \$32 billion in Libyan assets and promoting other countries to follow suit'.³³ Steven Heydemann took the same view, identifying the decision-making on Libya as 'accelerating'. The whole process played out was very short, especially the period of debate around whether to intervene to save Benghazi was even shorter.³⁴ Furthermore, by considering crisis management, Stephen Flanagan also agrees that Libya in fact proved that NATO could act very quickly.³⁵ There were some expectations that it would take months for NATO or the US to decide to act, but in fact, once it decided, moving to the direction of taking actions was only a matter of less than three weeks, in which NATO put together its initial planning. This was actually very fast compared with the response to Bosnia or Kosovo where it took years or months before NATO intervened. In this sense, it would be inappropriate to criticise US reluctance in Libya, as those criticisms ignored the fact that US reaction was de facto relatively speedy throughout the history of international interventions.

³² Interview with Ambassador Kathleen Stephens.

³³ Ivo H. Daalder and James G. Stavridis, 'NATO's Victory in Libya', *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2012.

³⁴ Interview with Steven Heydemann,

³⁵ Interview with Stephen Flanagan, the Henry A. Kissinger Chair in Diplomacy and National Security at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, 10 July 2012.

However, there were also some scholars like George Joffe who were tolerant towards the US decision on not responding so quickly and not representing as a driving force in the case of Libya. One incentive for Washington's slowness, as he said, was the belief that Libya would be a long-awaited lesson to its European allies, one could help remind them of the burden-sharing responsibility.³⁶ The US has been bearing the lion share of the burden to provide military capabilities to the Alliance since the very beginning, resulting in years of complaints about the European members. To be specific, the US share of NATO military spending has soared to more than 70%, much more than during the Cold War heyday when Washington maintained hundreds of thousands of US troops across Europe.³⁷ However, though the tension within NATO has been repeatedly highlighted, no concrete steps have been taken to solve that problem. Former Secretary of Defence Robert Gates delivered a speech on reflections on the status and future of the transatlantic alliance when he left office, warning that NATO risked 'military irrelevance' unless spending would be increased by members other than the US.³⁸ There was a prominent concern that the US public would not stand for the imbalanced share of burdens much longer, raising an urgent request for Europe to invest more capabilities.³⁹ Theoretically, when the Libyan mission came, there was no question that the US could use it to test the European capacity. As anticipated, Libya would at least become an example of how Europe could perform on its own. Yet as the operation unfolded, it only discovered a fact that European countries remained unprepared for a very modest operation like Libya. This on one hand reminded the Europeans of the urgency that they should commit themselves to increasing their capabilities, but on the other hand also brought an accusation that Washington's reluctance in Libya was in fact a deliberate act.

Was the US intentionally using Libya to teach its European allies a lesson that they would probably fail a mission if merely relying on their present capabilities? Both Matthew Kroenig and Nora Bensahel thought it would be a mistake to argue that the

³⁶ George Joffe (2012) Middle East Symposium 'One Year on from the Arab Spring?', *University of Birmingham*, 24 February.

³⁷ Harriett Baldwin (2013) 'Defence Spending, National Security and Alliance Solidarity', *NATO Parliamentary Assembly*, 12 October, p. 3. Ian Traynor (2011) 'US Defence Chief Blasts Europe Over NATO', *The Guardian*, 10 June. Also see Appendix 2 'Defence expenditures of NATO countries'.

³⁸ Robert Gates (2011) 'Reflections on the Status and Future of the Transatlantic Alliance'. Ian Traynor (2011).

³⁹ Jordan Becker (2012) 'Strategic Culture and Burden Sharing in NATO: False Friends?', *US Air Force Academy*.

US intended to send a message of how insufficient the European capabilities were before deciding to conduct operations in Libya.⁴⁰ To teach the European allies of burden-sharing responsibility was just a byproduct of the US action rather than a pre-operation design, though the campaign played out exposed even more shortcomings in the European defence. Furthermore, if the US deliberately intended not to take actions quickly, why did it become more involved to implement the beginning phase of air campaign immediately when required by France and Britain? Why not just stand behind the curtain, watching the Libyan mission become a more astonishing lesson to the Europe? It was simply because that the US did not forecast at the beginning that its relatively reluctant action would reveal how long the Europeans had been free-riding the transatlantic security architecture. But it was also worth noting that from a broader US perspective, Washington benefited from the consequences, though it did not plan to communicate that lesson to its allies purposely.

To sum up, the Americans clearly hesitated to intervene in Libya compared with the French and the British who took the lead straightway after the outburst of violence. There were many reasons for the US to be reluctant in the context of economic pressures and squabbles over poor military performance in Afghanistan and Iraq. The public enthusiasm for a third Middle East war was apparently low, forbidding the US to take actions in Libya when its hands were already full. Most importantly, there was a serious concern among decision-makers that no direct or first-order US interests were at stake in Libya. It was Europe rather than the US that was facing threats, thereby why should the US intervene in a 'European project' that was costly and risky? In fact, the Libyan mission was neither a European nor an American project, instead, it was a transatlantic or an international project that should be accomplished by all countries dedicated to shoulder the 'R2P'. Last but not least, though some people argued that pragmatically the US would act slowly due to the way of how democracy worked out, the US response to Libya was actually much quicker than in previous cases such as Bosnia and Kosovo where it took years or months before it intervened. Since the initial response had been characterised as relative reluctance, why did the US change its mind and join the operation later? How has the US been persuaded to follow in the footsteps of France and Britain?

⁴⁰ Interview with Nora Bensahel; interview with Matthew Kroenig.

8.3 Why did the US eventually decide to participate in the Libyan mission?

8.3.1 The realistic dimension: traditional national interests were present

From a pure realist perspective, the roots of intervening in Libya were inadequate in the sense that there were no direct, first-order US interests at stake. However, though acknowledging that America's security was not threatened, President Obama emphasised that he had a responsibility to act when the US 'interests and values' were at risk. According to him, 'That is what happened in Libya over the course of these last six weeks.'⁴¹ Charles Kupchan mentioned that traditional national interests were not completely absent in Libya. He underlined two categories of national interests that were involved in Libya, saying that one was 'the belief whether the Libyan mission was justified or not', and the other was a respect that 'the impetus for intervening was coming from others'.⁴² On one hand, taking actions in Libya was an important step in providing support for the Arab Spring and in sending a signal that crackdowns on democratic protests would not be tolerated. On the other hand, by highlighting external pressures from actors such as the French, the British, and the Arab League, the US did not want to be seen as blocked to act by others because it had, for a long time, been encouraging others to be more proactive and more responsible.

Christopher Chivvis took the same view on where the national security interests were, emphasising the main one was to show support for the revolutions that were taking place across the Arab World. He also agreed that the US was facing pressures from other countries, yet he stressed on the original intention for intervening was to help the allies rather than to passively respond to those pressures.⁴³ There was a concern that if the situation went out of control in Libya, anxieties would spread across borders to the east and west of Egypt, thereby lots of refugees would go to Europe, which would become a tremendous threat to the allies. Reducing the allies' security would reduce the US own security in a second way, given that they both belonged to

⁴¹ President Obama (2011) 'Obama Libya Speech: US "Interests and Values" at Risk', 28 March.

⁴² Interview with Charles Kupchan.

⁴³ Interview with Christopher Chivvis.

the same alliance that embraced the principle that ‘an attack against one member state is considered an attack against all’. When the ABC News’ Senior White House Correspondent Jake Tapper asked Secretary of Defence Robert Gates on the *‘This Week’* show about whether Libya posed an actual or imminent threat to the US, Gates answered ‘No...but the engagement of the Arabs, the engagement of the Europeans, the general humanitarian question that was at stake.’⁴⁴ Generally the US perceived at least two traditional national interests at stake in Libya: to encourage those Arab countries that were fighting for democracy and to assist the allies who used to support the US when needed. More importantly, US policy on Libya was consistent with Obama’s grand strategy on ‘counterpunching’ that the administration ‘has been willing to assert its influence and ideals across the globe when challenged by other countries, reassuring allies and signalling resolve to rivals’.⁴⁵

Encourage Arab countries In *Obama’s Interventions: Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya*, Luca Tardelli was on target arguing that ‘Obama’s decision to intervene in Libya resulted from the administration’s desire to both avert a possible humanitarian disaster in Benghazi as well as to safeguard the revolutionary transitions taking place both in Libya and neighbouring countries’.⁴⁶ Stephen Flanagan shared the same view, predicting that if Gaddafi were allowed to undertake actions against Benghazi and others in the west, it would have been a signal to other authoritarian leaders in the Middle East that the West would not bother if they could just kill enough people.⁴⁷ From the US policy perspective, there was a great hope about the Arab awakening in the Arab Spring. In Obama’s speech on the Middle East and North Africa on May 19, 2011, the President identified the Arab Spring as a ‘historical opportunity’ to translate US support for ‘political and economic reform in the Middle East and North Africa that can meet the legitimate aspirations of ordinary people throughout the region’ into concrete actions.⁴⁸ Hillary Clinton, the Secretary of State, also reaffirmed the American conviction that ‘real democratic change...is in the national interest of the

⁴⁴ Joshua Miller (2011) ‘Defence Secretary: Libya Did Not Pose Threat to US, Was Not “Vital National Interest” to Intervene’, *ABC News*, 27 March.

⁴⁵ Daniel Drezner (2011) ‘Does Obama Have a Grand Strategy?: Why We Need Doctrines in Uncertain Times’, *Foreign Affairs*, July/August Issue.

⁴⁶ Luca Tardelli (2011) p. 22.

⁴⁷ Interview with Stephen Flanagan.

⁴⁸ President Obama (2011) ‘Remarks by the President on the Middle East and North Africa’, 19 May.

US'.⁴⁹ Their analysis proved admirably accurate, in that if Gaddafi were able to depict himself as impregnable, it would have been very damaging to the rest of what was happening in the Arab World. Some of the other authoritarian regimes would decide to use brutal repression as a way to end protests as well. Robert Gates believed that a potential significantly destabilizing event taking place in Libya would put the revolutions in both Tunisia and Egypt at risk, given that Libya was a 'part of a broader wave of unrest across North Africa and the Middle East that had led to the ousting of long-standing regimes in Tunisia and Egypt'.⁵⁰ These concerns resulted in the formation of a very strong group of advisers, which was led by the Special Assistant to the President Samantha Power, the US Ambassador to the UN Susan Rice and Hillary Clinton, warning that the US inaction would undermine the process of political change in the Middle East.⁵¹ Thus, the consensus became clear that only through intervention could the US avoid sending this kind of wrong message that the international community would allow this kind of slaughter to continue recklessly.

Assist European allies It was worth questioning whether the US was 'pushed' by the other countries to participate in the Libyan mission. Or was the US 'self-motivated' by the notion that 'your allies' interests become your interests'? In other words, did Washington give priority to the need of helping European allies when making decision on whether to intervene in Libya? James Lindsay insisted that in the case of Libya, the administration would hardly do anything if it had not been through the French and the British lobbying Washington because there were certainly plenty of other places that were calling for humanitarian interventions.⁵² President Obama and Hillary Clinton found themselves driven by concerns on what the allies wanted, which had ever happened in Kosovo where the allies knew clearly about what should be done there. Similarly in Libya, the French and the British were well aware of the necessity to get involved: 'Despite all negative comments, Libya shows that there is a political and diplomatic dynamic of European construction and an active European

⁴⁹ Luca Tardelli (2011) p. 21.

⁵⁰ Joshua Miller (2011). 'Security Council Authorises "All Necessary Measures" to Protect Civilians in Libya', *UN News Centre*, 17 March.

⁵¹ James Mann (2012) *The Obamians: The Struggle Inside the White House to Redefine American Power*, New York: Viking. David Gergen (2011) 'What Is Obama's Endgame in Libya?', *CNN*, 21 March.

⁵² Interview with James Lindsay, Senior Vice President, Director of Studies and Maurice R. Greenberg Chair at the Council on Foreign Relations, 10 July 2012.

voice in world affairs'.⁵³ Lindsay's argument was mainly based on the realistic and strategic assumption that Washington had very little at stake in Libya, but he ignored the fact that if Washington understood it was crucial to help its allies in Libya, it would join the operation regardless of whether or when its allies made the request; yet if Washington denied the emergency to provide support to its allies, it would not announce participation even if its allies required. Perhaps a better explanation would be that US decision on Libya was accelerated, not determined, by the French and the British lobbying. The US might have already noticed its allies had immense interests in peril. For example, France and Britain were worried about the potential instability and the increasing violent extremism, and Italy was particularly concerned about the potential refugees.⁵⁴ Without doubt, when two very close US allies, France and Britain, were asking the US to get involved, the possibility of US engagement in Libya would certainly increase. According to Hillary Clinton, 'How could you stand by when France and the UK and other Europeans and the Arab League and your Arab partners were saying you have got to do something?'⁵⁵ Thus, the internal belief—'though the strategic interest was not direct in Libya, there was a strategic interest in helping US allies'—ultimately facilitated US intervention in Libya.⁵⁶

Moreover, Libya witnessed a critical moment when the Europeans were willing to do something on their own, which had long been expected by the US. France and Britain had mentioned clearly at the very start that they intended to take the lead in enforcing a no-fly zone. Spain, Norway and Denmark quickly expressed their support by saying that they would contribute to the operation.⁵⁷ To have the Europeans shoulder more in terms of defence both in and outside of Europe was exactly what the US had wished to see since the end of the Cold War. With respect to that, Libya became an opportunity for the US to offer assistance in a way of encouraging its allies to make more contributions to future tasks. The good function of an alliance is based on all members' respect for the principle that 'you help me, I help you'. Each member is

⁵³ This is said by Bernard Valero, the spokesman of the French Foreign Ministry. See Steven Erlanger (2011) 'France and Britain Lead Military Push on Libya', *The New York Times*, 18 March.

⁵⁴ Specifically, France played a vanguard role in carrying out intervention in Libya, because it had a very large immigrant population that originated in the Maghreb, and for which the 'Arab Spring' was vitally important and a source of fascination and pride. See Dominique Moisi (2011) 'France Had a Duty to Intervene in Libya', *The Guardian*, 23 March.

⁵⁵ Joshua Miller (2011).

⁵⁶ Interview with Nora Bensahel.

⁵⁷ Steven Erlanger (2011).

expecting from an alliance that it will get something in return, not simply 'do somebody's laundry'. There is no exception in the case of the US. On the issue of Libya, Washington was of course willing to see European capitals volunteer to assume the responsibility, yet at the same time it was also willing to provide necessary help when required. Last but not least, offering its allies support was also beneficial to consolidating the US position as a leader in the global security architecture. Although Washington repeatedly asked the European capitals to shoulder more responsibility, it did not mean that the US was hoping for a real shift towards a more balanced partnership with Europe, in which the US would give up its dominant role. Therefore, when the allies asked for US assistance in Libya, it simultaneously reaffirmed the perception of how important the US was to the international security system. In this sense, the US was certainly motivated by self-fulfilment rather than persuaded or pushed by its allies to take actions in Libya, though the request from the Europeans also played an essential role.

8.3.2 The humanitarian dimension: another 'Afghanistan' or another 'Rwanda'?

There was no doubt that the Libyan mission served some US interests, yet the understanding of what US interests were involved in Libya was not wide-spread at the beginning. As a result, a heated debate arose among officials in the administration over whether to take actions in Libya, entailing how realism versus liberal internationalism could exert influence on US foreign policy. Inside the administration, senior officials were lined up on both sides. On one hand, Robert Gates, then-US Secretary of Defence, Thomas Donilon, National Security Advisor, and John Brennan, the chief counterterrorism adviser to Obama, strongly opposed the intervention in Libya. Bearing realists' calculations in mind, they urged caution by arguing that 'Libya was not vital to American national security interests'.⁵⁸ Gates made his views known at the very beginning, saying that the US should stick to offering communications, surveillance and other support rather than putting its 'boots on the ground'. He was opposed to attacking Libya and had said as much in several public statements. Donilon was also reportedly wary of the effects of committing to a

⁵⁸ Helene Cooper (2011) 'Obama Takes Hard Line With Libya After Shift by Clinton', *The New York Times*, 18 March.

lengthy military mission in Libya.⁵⁹ As he stressed, the US had already been in wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, not to mention that there were other more urgent national security threats on the rise such as the Iran nuclear programme. Brennan even expressed his concern that the Libyan rebels remained largely unknown to US officials, and could have ties to Al-Qaeda. According to him, groups such as Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb were active in Algeria and other countries in the region and had sought to bolster the opposition to Gaddafi, raising fears about the type of government that could replace the four-decade-old dictatorship if it fell.⁶⁰ In general, people in Gates' camp shared concerns about US involvement in Libya, further warning the administration that the Libyan war might turn out to be another deadlocked 'Afghanistan', which had already become a nightmare of all Americans.

On the other hand, Samantha Power, who was not only the Special Assistant to President Obama but also a writer of a Pulitzer Prize winning book about the genocide in Rwanda, formed the other influential camp within the government with Susan Rice, the US Ambassador to the UN, and Hillary Clinton, the Secretary of State, expecting to accelerate US steps to take actions in Libya. As major advocates, they were mainly concerned that the Libyan crisis would deteriorate into another 'Rwanda', where 'the Security Council fails even to consider taking decisive action in the face of genocide, mass murder, and/or ethnic cleansing'⁶¹. Dating back to December 2007 when then-Senator Hillary Clinton was interviewed on *'This Week'* show, she had already expressed her regrets about Rwanda and stressed her determination to prevent 'more Rwandas' in the future: 'I think that for me it was one of the most poignant and difficult experiences when...I was able to go to Rwanda and be part of expressing our deep regrets because we did not speak out adequately enough and we certainly did not take action.'⁶² In the case of Libya, Hillary Clinton again recalled those instances from recent history when a lack of US intervention had left hundreds of thousands dead, emphasising that the 'Responsibility to Protect' (R2P) was acquired as humanitarian emergency arose. She said that the UN-backed military intervention in Libya would be 'a watershed moment in international decision-making. We learned a

⁵⁹ Josh Rogin (2011) 'How Obama Turned on a Dime Toward War', *Foreign Policy*, 18 March.

⁶⁰ Evan Perez (2011) 'Brennan: US Wary of Terrorism in Libya', *The Wall Street Journal*, 18 March.

⁶¹ Nicholas J. Wheeler (2005) 'A Victory for Common Humanity? The Responsibility to Protect after the 2005 World Summit', *Conference on 'The UN at Sixty: Celebration or Wake?'*, 6-7 October, p. 1.

⁶² 'Hillary: No "Formal" Role for Bill', *ABC News*, 31 December 2007.

lot in the 1990s. We saw what happened in Rwanda. It took a long time in the Balkans, in Kosovo to deal with a tyrant'.⁶³

Susan Rice was a staffer at the National Security Council (NSC) when the world failed to stop the genocide in Rwanda. According to the *Time* magazine, Susan Rice once told Samantha Power, who was then a Harvard scholar, 'I swore to myself that if I ever faced such a crisis (as Rwanda) again, I would come down on the side of dramatic action, going down in flames if that was required.'⁶⁴ As Gaddafi's troops closed in on the rebel stronghold of Benghazi on March 15, 2011, Obama put the fate of the city's one million residents in the hands of Rice who, as the US Ambassador to the UN, was determined to get a tougher resolution allowing broader intervention. Rice stated that humanitarian intervention was not about going to war for imminent national security needs but to save innocent lives. Hence, she moved on to stress that Gaddafi's violence had already placed the question of when to intervene to save lives squarely on the table.⁶⁵ Samantha Power was also one of the *Obamians* with deep-seated ideas on the issue of Libya. In the light of press reports of Samantha Power, it would be extremely embarrassing to have people again criticise Washington for decades that it had stood by while the Libyan massacre was going on.⁶⁶

Now, the three women were pushing for US intervention to stop a looming humanitarian catastrophe in Libya. Senator John Kerry (D-MA) depicted the debate within the administration as 'healthy', reemphasising that 'the memory of Rwanda, alongside Iraq, made it clear' that the US needed to act.⁶⁷ As the potential slaughter of the Libyan Benghazi uprising framed around a need for humanitarian intervention, Power's camp began to play a more important role. The broad outline of a reason for US intervention became visible. President Obama was eventually convinced by the humanitarian calculations that the US had the responsibility to prevent Gaddafi from slaughtering innocent civilians, stating that the UN, the Arab League and other countries 'are saying we need to intercede to make sure that a disaster does not

⁶³ Joshua Miller (2011).

⁶⁴ Michael Crowley (2011) 'Susan Rice, Samantha Power, Rwanda and Libya', *Time*, 24 March. Massimo Calabresi (2011) 'Susan Rice: A Voice for Intervention', *Time*, 24 March.

⁶⁵ Massimo Calabresi (2011).

⁶⁶ James Mann (2012).

⁶⁷ Helene Cooper (2011).

happen on our watch as has happened in the past when the international community stood idly by'.⁶⁸ He further rejected the argument for inaction when defending US military involvement in Libya as a necessary humanitarian intervention on March 28, saying that

*To brush aside America's responsibility as a leader and—more profoundly—our responsibilities to our fellow human beings under such circumstances would have been a betrayal of who we are...Some nations may be able to turn a blind eye to atrocities in other countries. The United States of America is different. And as President, I refused to wait for the images of slaughter and mass graves before taking action.*⁶⁹

Actually before the senior-level meeting was held at the White House on March 15, the consensus around Washington was that military action against Libya was not in the cards. However, after the meeting where 'the President was referring to the broader change going on in the Middle East and the need to rebalance US foreign policy toward a greater focus on democracy and human rights', the White House completely altered its stance and successfully pushed for the authorisation for military intervention in Libya.⁷⁰ Steve Clemons, the foreign policy chief at the New America Foundation summarised that 'Gates is clearly not on board with what is going on...Clinton won the bureaucratic battle to use DOD resources to achieve what is essentially the State Department's objective...and Obama let it happen'.⁷¹ It was true that 'Hillary and Susan Rice were key parts of this story because Hillary got the Arab buy-in and Susan worked the UN to get a 10-to-5 vote, which is no easy thing', but it was also worth noting that the key decision was in fact made by Obama himself.⁷² Matthew Kroenig recalled the story he had been told by a government official that on March 15, the President listened to the options being presented at the meeting, then he left the room and thought about it and then on his own made the decision that he did not want another Rwanda and was prepared to intervene even though there might not be enough interests at stake.⁷³

⁶⁸ David Jackson (2011) 'One Reason for Obama's Decision on Libya: Rwanda', *The Oval*, 24 March.

⁶⁹ President Obama (2011) 'Obama Libya Speech: US "Interests and Values" at Risk', 28 March.

⁷⁰ Josh Rogin (2011).

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² The statement was made by Brian Katulis, a national security expert with the Centre for American Progress, a liberal group with close ties to the administration. See Helene Cooper (2011).

⁷³ Interview with Matthew Kroenig.

For the President, the US had to take actions to show the world that this was something the Americans were not acting out of any narrow interests. There was no secret plan to get the Libyan oil or to do something else that would take over Libya. It was truly a response to an international demand. In other words, for the US, 'Libya was a special case—urgent military intervention was required to stave off a humanitarian disaster'.⁷⁴ As James Mann concludes in *The Obamians*, President Obama's intervention in Libya demonstrated for the first time that he was willing to put the American military to work on behalf of humanitarian goals, in a way that the realists he admired would not.⁷⁵ But if the decision was simply driven by liberal internationalists' considerations, why not Somalia or Congo, where people were also suffering from humanitarian crisis the same as in Libya? Why did Obama's stance in Libya differ significantly from his strategy regarding the other Arab revolutions?⁷⁶ A lot of people believed these differences undermined the humanitarian claims that the US leaders made about their objectives in intervening in Libya. Moreover, as time wore on and the Syrian death toll mounted, the explanation that the US intervened in Libya mainly because of humanitarian consideration became increasingly implausible. In fact, the reality was not that simple. There was actually a third dimension that often left out of discussion, namely feasibility.

8.3.3 A third dimension: feasibility

Legitimacy Christopher Chivvis thought the reason why the US intervened in Libya rather than Congo or Somalia was because Libya was feasible. The source of its feasibility, as he identified, came from legitimacy.⁷⁷ It was the fact that Gaddafi was the spy of broader international community, including the Arab World, hence there was far-ranging support for this intervention not only in the US and Europe, but also in the region itself.⁷⁸ This was a very important condition that made the intervention

⁷⁴ Martin Indyk, Kenneth Lieberthal, and Michael O'Hanlon (2012) p. 172.

⁷⁵ James Mann (2012).

⁷⁶ In Egypt and Tunisia, Obama chose to rebalance US stance gradually backing away from support for President Hosni Mubarak and Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali and allowing the popular movements to run their course. In Yemen and Bahrain, where the uprising have turned violent, Obama has not even uttered a word in support of armed intervention—instead pressing those regimes to embrace reform on their own. See Josh Rogin (2011).

⁷⁷ Interview with Christopher Chivvis.

⁷⁸ A caricature of a despot, Gaddafi personified the type of odious adversary whom all democrats wanted to see defeated. His behaviour has been abominable for decades—and not only towards his own

possible and legitimate. In addition, China and Russia did not stand in the way, facilitating the adoption of a UN Security Council Resolution that authorised member states to take military actions.⁷⁹ There has always been functional value placed on getting international approval. What would happen in the Gulf War if George H. W. Bush were unable to get the UN Security Council Resolution? The authorisation was important, whereas it did not mean that the US would not occasionally intervene even without a UN Security Council Resolution. The reason why the President went to get the UN authorisation was not because he regarded it as vital to wage a war, instead, he made the calculation that it would enable the US to avoid political problems at home. Similarly in the case of Libya, the US did not take any action until the UN legitimised it, which helped Washington obtain both strategic and moral advantages.

However, it was not sufficiently convincing to join a campaign just with the UN authorisation. The legacy of Kosovo and Iraq reminded the US that an intervention should be both legal and legitimate, otherwise people would be able to criticise it from either perspective. As Charles Kupchan said, the intervention in Kosovo was illegal but legitimate, because even though there was no UN Security Council Resolution, Kosovo enjoyed broad support in the core world opinion; while the invasion in Iraq was legal but illegitimate, because it received authorisation but did not gain enough support around the world.⁸⁰ In the case of Libya, one of the reasons why the intervention enjoyed legitimacy was NATO. If it had been the US alone, it would have been much more problematic. That was also why Washington insisted on using NATO even though France initially opposed NATO carrying out military support in view of the concern that ‘the Alliance has an aggressive image in the Arab World’.⁸¹

people. See Dominique Moisi (2011).

⁷⁹ At the same time, Russian officials made it clear that serious questions remained, including how a potential no-fly zone would operate and who would enforce it. According to Russia's representative at the UN Vitaly Churkin, ‘To say we need to act quickly, as fast as possible, but not to provide answers to those fundamental questions is not really helping, it is just beating the air’. He moved on to emphasise that ‘You need to be sure any decision the council takes is not going to exacerbate the military-political situation in Libya’. See ‘Details Sought on Libya No-Fly Plan’, *The Moscow Times*, 16 March 2011.

⁸⁰ Interview with Charles Kupchan.

⁸¹ Alan Cowell and Steven Erlanger (2011) ‘France Becomes First Country to Recognise Libyan Rebels’, *The New York Times*, 10 March.

Karim Mezran argued that Italy was the first country that demanded a NATO command.⁸² Although France and Britain wanted to go on their own, they found their feet stopped by the Italians who refused to approve either a French or a British command. What France and Britain were truly talking about was to have a combined Anglo-French command outside of the NATO command structure, yet Italy insisted on going through NATO precisely to make it more international on the European side and to keep the US operating within the NATO framework.⁸³ Thus, the Europeans had no choice but to require US help to solve the dilemma, given that the allies had already broken up on this issue: France and Britain wanted to go alone; Italy rejected them to go; and Germany wanted to be neutral.⁸⁴ It became clear that the US had to intervene to complete the mission by dragging in NATO, otherwise Italy would be the incredible cost for the US. There was a desire to preserve the alliance unity, but the alliance was not united on this. In fact, Italy's bid to call for a NATO command mainly rested on its intension to have the US on board, which would guarantee that the allies could win the war. Umberto Bossi, the truculent founder of the Northern League Party was putting pressure on Silvio Berlusconi not to act, because he was badly worried about retaliation due to the close distance between Italy and Libya.⁸⁵ There was a feeling that Gaddafi might unleash some of his agencies to cause terrorist attacks on Italy. On the other hand, a lot of Italians had Libyan contracts for construction or energy, hence they would lose all those contracts if Gaddafi were going to survive though the allies intervened. The Italians were actually riding the fence, and they could not come down one side or the other. By assessing the full complexity of the situation, the Italians were certainly more cautious than the French and the British, thereby more eager to see Gaddafi lose the war. As a result, the

⁸² Interview with Karim Mezran.

⁸³ Actually at the very beginning, France had set itself apart from some other nations, including the US, by insisting that any military support be authorised by the UN Security Council, but not carried out by NATO, since the Alliance had an aggressive image in the Arab World. The French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe even opposed France resuming full membership in NATO. See Alan Cowell and Steven Erlanger (2011) 'France Becomes First Country to Recognise Libyan Rebels', *The New York Times*, 10 March.

⁸⁴ The French-British forcefulness on Libya did not make all Europeans happy. Germany abstained in the vote at the UN and said it would not take part in military action. It expressed reservations about the no-fly zone proposal, and questioned the enforcement plan. Italy, more dependent than others on Libyan natural gas and oil, reluctantly decided to allow its military bases to be used to enforce a no-fly zone to protect Libyan civilians. See Steven Erlanger (2011) 'France and Britain Lead Military Push on Libya', *The New York Times*, 18 March and 'Details sought on Libya No-Fly Plan', *The Moscow Times*, 16 March 2011.

⁸⁵ Alessandro Speciale (2011) 'Berlusconi's Libya Conundrum', *The Global Post*, 22 March.

Libyan operation was implemented under the framework of NATO rather than of any bilateral cooperation.

Cost Another source of feasibility came from the evaluation of military inputs. Nora Bensahel believed what ultimately convinced President Obama to intervene in Libya was that the mission was very low cost to the US.⁸⁶ The European allies made clear they only wanted US help for the initial air campaign and some intelligence support thereafter. President Obama agreed that the US could have this limited involvement without taking responsibility for what would happen in the country after Gaddafi fell. The assessment that it would be done at very low cost turned out to be correct: the total cost to the US, excluding man hours and military personnel who worked on it, was about \$1 billion. It was very little in the scheme of the US defence budget which used to reach \$550 billion a year before the US got to the costs of wars in either Afghanistan or Iraq. Why the cost was low, as Bensahel further explained, was because of limited involvement.⁸⁷ It was hard to imagine what the scenario would be for the US to get involved at tremendously high cost. With regard to this, Syria was the comparative case to show why the US decided to take actions in Libya not in other states that were also suffering from humanitarian crises. Although Syria was of greater strategic importance to the US than Libya in terms of chain reaction that resolving the Syrian crisis would also deal a severe setback to Iran's grandiose Middle East ambitions, it did not see Obama actively seek Assad's overthrow. Libya was basically a big flight desert, making military options in Libya much easier. For instance, the Libyan air defences could be quickly taken out from the sky because they were not advanced, thus the allies could have free control of the sky without putting any personnel really on the ground. Syria, quite the opposite; had more effective air force and air defences, which would make enforcing a no-fly zone more difficult. Thus, there was no way to affect the course of conflicts solely from the air, and it would cost hundreds of thousands of troops if ground presence was the only solution, regardless of the fact that Syria was with no guarantee of a good outcome. In other words, the US had limited tools available to effect change in Syria, given 'the capabilities of the Syrian army, its alliance with Hezbollah and Iran, and the fact that

⁸⁶ Interview with Nora Bensahel.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

the US forces were now engaged in three wars in the Middle East already'.⁸⁸ Moreover, the Libyan rebels had already controlled a good portion of the country, enabling the allies to work with them on the civilian side. Yet unlike in Libya, the US ambassador to Syria reported that 'opposition leaders made clear they did not want US military intervention'.⁸⁹ All these including the prediction that Syria would be of great cost and that involvement might cause anti-US sentiment eventually made military intervention in Syria not a serious option.

Timing The US assessment on cost mainly included that Libya was a crisis that really could be handled mostly by the Europeans and that the US could provide a supporting rather than a leading role in another intervention in the area of the Middle East. In addition to the calculation of low cost, there was another factor that further made the Libyan mission militarily feasible: the particular timing when President Obama chose to get involved. James Mann believed that the *Obamians*, a trusted crew of advisers to President Obama, actually did not expect a military campaign at the beginning, instead, they 'hoped Gaddafi might behave like other Middle Eastern leaders in the early weeks of the Arab Spring, either stepping aside like Mubarak or announcing some immediate reforms like Jordan's King Abdullah'.⁹⁰ Yet that was soon proved to be a misjudgement. What finally boosted the US move was when Gaddafi talked about going house to house in Benghazi to kill people like rats. The estimated number of innocent civilians who would be killed if that happened would be tens of thousands. To have that kind of slaughter undertaken with international community completely unable to do anything would be a real blemish on not just the US but also the whole world. Samantha Power later reflected, 'We were trying to convince Gaddafi to act with restraint and moderation, but he had already, right from day one, decided to crush this thing. He was taking the other path, the non-Tunisia choice.'⁹¹ Although it is true that NATO allies and the international community cannot prevent every humanitarian disaster or prevent all the political misleads of some leaders, there are instances where they can do something about it. According to Obama's speeches delivered in March, Libya was exactly the case where the international community

⁸⁸ Martin Indyk, Kenneth Lieberthal, and Michael O'Hanlon (2012) p. 173.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ James Mann (2012) p. 283.

⁹¹ Ibid.

had the capacity to achieve some goals. It was not about putting a risk higher level of interests, but an opportunity to work with allies and partners to realise an outcome in a reasonable amount of time. Moreover, Libya was actually regarded as an easy case because there was no leader like Gaddafi who truly enjoyed no regional affection.⁹² He was 'one of the most eccentric, cruel, and unpredictable autocrats in the world', given that he once said 'Those who do not love me do not deserve to live!'⁹³ When Gaddafi was talking about 'purge' that would proceed 'room by room' and 'individual by individual', it was truly believed that he was desperate to do this.⁹⁴ Mindful that Gaddafi was a threat to not only his own people but also the region as a whole, the consensus among international community became unprecedentedly apparent that 'Gaddafi must go and go for good'.⁹⁵ Meanwhile, the debate over what the US should do also changed dramatically as regime forces approached Benghazi, for the possibility seemed to become more and more likely that there would be some massive civilian casualties because of an anticipated regime attack on Benghazi. That really changed the tone of the debate in the US and a lot of objections to intervention were more or less pushed aside as the dynamic sound ground changed. As a result, the pace of decision-making was forced to accelerate when the Libyan military started moving incredibly fast.

Once the UN Security Council Resolutions, the regional organisation, and the Arab League had justified on the necessary means, all political elements with respect to the legal basis for intervention were appropriately addressed. Moreover, most of the European allies agreed that Libya was the place NATO could act to prevent humanitarian catastrophe within the norms of international law, even though Germany, Poland and some others did not choose to contribute. Further, the potential fall of Benghazi made the Libyan crisis rise above the bar as a humanitarian emergency, urging the US to get involved at this particular timing. When all those came together, it became quite possible for the Obama administration to take actions.

⁹² Preventing Gaddafi from rebuilding the wall of fear that fell in Tunisia and Egypt was essential if the 'Arab Spring' was not to be succeeded by a new winter of discontent. See Dominique Moisi (2011).

⁹³ Hillary Clinton's memoir: Hillary Clinton (2014) *Hard Choices*, London: Simon and Schuster, p. 365.

⁹⁴ OSC Report GMP20110316950075, 'Statement on Libyan TV Says Gaddafi Forces Await "Zero Hour"' to Retake Benghazi', 16 March 2011, and OSC Report GMP20110317676005.

⁹⁵ 'Libya: Obama, Cameron and Sarkozy Vow Gaddafi Must Go', *BBC News*, 15 April 2011.

Military capability In addition to the low cost and the particular timing, Washington also took the evaluation of military capability into account when making decision on Libya. There were some people like Kori Schake, who doubted whether the Europeans were really incapable of tackling Gaddafi on their own. By considering that 'Libya spent only \$1 billion on its military in the year before the rebels and NATO militaries felled Muammar Gaddafi—that is around 2% of the UK's defence budget', he argued that 'Britain's superb military alone could probably have found a way to succeed'.⁹⁶ In terms of pure balance of power, the British military was much more powerful than the Libyan military, however, when it came to this specific operation, specific capabilities rather than the overall strength would play a more effective role. First of all, in order to unfold the operation, the Libyan air defence network had to be taken down otherwise the pilots from any country would be at great risk. Frankly, besides the US, the ability to defeat the air defence system was something right now no European country or any other country in the world could do. For example, the US had vast piles of air-launched cruise missiles that were vital to create a no-fly zone in Libya, while the British only had very small reserves. Hence on this specific cruise missiles, Britain run out very quickly in the campaign, which dramatically decreased its capability to force the capitulation of the dictator. Hence, for the purpose of guaranteeing that the allies would not fail, the US ultimately decided to intervene as the cruise missiles provider who could just stand off either from sea or air to attack tanks and aircrafts. The reason why the Americans agreed to at minimum come for the first week to 10 days of the air operation to knock put Gaddafi's air force and radar was mainly because that no European country, or even the collection of European countries, could have done that. In short, it was not the British in aggregate terms that did not have more powerful military than Libya, but they just did not have the right technology and the right capability to implement the mission.

With respect to how the campaign was truly carried out, Robert Gates complained that 'the mightiest military alliance in history is only 11 weeks into an operation against a poorly armed regime in a sparsely populated country. Yet many allies are beginning

⁹⁶ Kori Schake (2012) 'US Retrenchment Is Right and Overdue', in Tomas Valasek (ed.), *All Alone? What US Retrenchment Means for Europe and NATO*, Centre for European Reform, p. 9.

to run short of munitions, requiring the US, once more, to make up the difference'.⁹⁷ The gap between Washington and European capitals in terms of military capability was not built in a day.⁹⁸ In other words, it would be unrealistic to expect those European allies to take the full burden or to stop relying on US assistance immediately. Moreover, in the case of Libya, the US actually had a long history with Gaddafi dating back to the 1980s when the Reagan administration bombed Tripoli and Benghazi in retaliation for the attack on a West Berlin nightclub that killed two American servicemen and injured 79.⁹⁹ Viewing Libya as 'low-hanging fruit', the US was basically more experienced than those European countries to fight against Gaddafi. Therefore, based on the fact that the US was still indispensable in providing some critical military assistance to guarantee a victory, the Obama administration finally decided to move forward and fight together with its allies.

8.3.4 Why did the US transfer the Libyan mission to NATO and start 'leading from behind'?

Since March 19, coalition military operations under the auspices of the US-led Operation Odyssey Dawn (OOD) had achieved the objective of setting up a no-fly zone over Libya, laying a solid foundation for transferring the Libyan mission to NATO. The transition from the US-led OOD to the NATO-led Operation Unified Protector (OUP) thereafter went seamlessly.¹⁰⁰ NATO allies reached a unanimous agreement on March 27 to direct NATO to assume command and control of the civilian protection.¹⁰¹ The next day, President Obama and his team provided an update

⁹⁷ Ian Traynor (2011).

⁹⁸ For more information, see Appendix 3 'Armed forces—annual strength'.

⁹⁹ Edward Schumacher (1986/87) 'The United States and Libya', *Foreign Affairs*.

¹⁰⁰ 'NATO Transfer of Command is on Track', NATO, 29 March 2011.

¹⁰¹ On March 24, 2011, NATO allies decided to enforce the no-fly zone over Libya. At that moment, it was certain that there would be a coalition operation and a NATO operation but NATO allies were still considering whether NATO should take on a broader responsibility in accordance with the UN Security Council resolution. See 'NATO Secretary General's Statement on Libya No-Fly Zone', NATO, 24 March 2011. On March 27, 2011, NATO allies decided to take on the whole military operation in Libya. The goal was to 'protect civilians and civilian-populated areas under threat of attack from the Gaddafi regime'. 'NATO will implement all aspects of the UN Resolution. Nothing more, nothing less'. See 'Statement by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen on Libya', NATO, 27 March 2011.

on accomplishments to date, including the full transfer of enforcement of the no-fly zone to NATO.¹⁰²

Ever since the end of Cold War, the US has played a dominant role in almost every military intervention around the world. Even 'President Obama has hardly been shy about the projection of American power. Indeed, he oversaw a "surge" of US troops into Afghanistan and has dramatically ramped up the use of drone strikes to combat militant extremists.'¹⁰³ However, in the case of Libya, the US was, for the first time, not predisposed to the assertive and excessive use of military force, instead, it was perceived as 'leading from behind'.¹⁰⁴ The phrase certainly was not what the President or his advisers had ever mentioned, in fact, it was seized on in the media by unknown journalists. But it became widely accepted even in the official assessment on Libya military campaign.¹⁰⁵ Compared with Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq where the US was directing or leading in a very obvious way, Libya saw the US declining to play a dominant role. James Lindsay argued that the reason why both President Clinton and President Obama tried to minimise the visible level of the US military involvement abroad was precisely because intervention had become 'the worst choice and the worst necessity' both in Kosovo and Libya.¹⁰⁶ In the case of Libya, if the US led from the front rather than led from behind, Gaddafi would have gone sooner and there would have been fewer deaths, yet how could the President deal with the following public condemnation of intervention? How could the President persuade those opponents who were extremely concerned that the US would sink into another 'quagmire' as in Afghanistan and Iraq? According to the Gallup poll conducted on March 29, 2011, only 10% of Americans said the US should take the lead role in Libya, while the plurality, 36%, favoured a minor role for the US, and 22% thought the US should withdraw entirely.¹⁰⁷ No one knew how precious the opportunity cost would have been if the US decided to lead from the front, but certainly the President would have faced tougher objections, threatening to shrink or even abolish the pursuit

¹⁰² President Obama (2011) 'Remarks by the President in Address to the Nation on Libya', 28 March.

¹⁰³ Charles Kupchan (2012) 'A Still-Strong Alliance', *Policy Review*, No. 172, 30 March.

¹⁰⁴ Charles Krauthammer (2011) 'The Obama Doctrine: Leading From Behind', *The Washington Post*, 28 April.

¹⁰⁵ Michael Boyle (2011) 'Obama: "Leading From Behind" on Libya', *The Guardian*, 27 August. Leslie Gelb (2013) 'In Defence of Leading From Behind', *Foreign Policy*, 29 April.

¹⁰⁶ Interview with James Lindsay.

¹⁰⁷ Lydia Saad (2011) 'Americans Resist a Major US Role in Libya', *Gallup Politics*, 29 March.

of intervention. Those domestic concerns could be addressed by applying the framework of NATO, which could help obscure the essential role of Washington. Mindful of what happened in the Iraq war where the Bush administration's unilateral proposal of global War on Terror resulted in a dramatic increase in transatlantic tension, it was politically important to transfer the Libyan mission to NATO and start 'leading from behind', because on one hand, public support for intervention would be secured and on the other hand, criticism about overextending US military would fall of itself. More importantly, 'leading from behind' was in line with Obama's grand strategy on 'multilateral retrenchment' which was designed to 'curtail the United State's overseas commitments, restore its standing in the world, and shift burdens onto global partners'.¹⁰⁸ President Obama was elected to end the war in Iraq; he also placed great importance on multilateralism. He saw it as an opportunity to create more political benefits to the US by handing the Libyan mission to NATO, which would be characterised as a multilateral effort rather than the US acting unilaterally.¹⁰⁹

Paula Newberg introduced an interesting explanation about 'leading from behind' that the US could only provide moral rather than material support.¹¹⁰ Yet the US contribution was not really 'constrained'. In theory, 'leading from behind' allowed the US to limit its dominant role, yet in practice, it was still the US military that provided the most capabilities. According to Ivo Daalder, the US Ambassador to NATO, in the initial operation which was conducted in a coalition format before NATO came in, the US was by far and away the dominate military contributor to the operation, providing all kinds of assets in order to make it possible.¹¹¹ After 10 days operation, the US stepped back and NATO took over. Although the full transfer of command to NATO was planning to be completed just in several days, Robert Gates was not able to give a firm deadline for just how long US involvement would last.¹¹² Thus, even in the second part of operation, Washington continued to play a significant role behind

¹⁰⁸ Daniel Drezner (2011).

¹⁰⁹ On March 10, Hillary Clinton testified before the Congress and argued that this was not a time for the US to rush unilaterally into a volatile situation. Moreover, 'If there is a UN umbrella and under that NATO is doing the operation no one will see this as crusaders or East versus West'. See Hillary Clinton's memoir, *Hard Choices*, pp. 366-367, 376-377.

¹¹⁰ Interview with Paula Newberg, the Marshall B. Coyne Director of the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy at Georgetown University, 5 July 2012.

¹¹¹ Ivo Daalder and James Stavridis (2011) 'NATO's Success in Libya', *The New York Times*, 30 October. Ivo Daalder and James Stavridis (2012) 'NATO's Victory in Libya: The Right Way to Run an Intervention', *Foreign Affairs*.

¹¹² Elisabeth Bumiller and Thom Shanker (2011).

scenes, leaving the American Navy and Air Force very much involved in enforcing a no-fly zone over Libya. For example, to minimize civilian casualties, it was required to obtain a high degree of surveillance, the vast majority of which was provided by the US. Generally, it was true that the US was not playing a dominant role in Libya, however, it did not mean that the US was not playing a significant role there. Although it were the Europeans who flew large number of combat sorties, the US support was absolutely essential, particularly in the area of the intelligence and surveillance. Further, as Nora Bensahel identified, another area where US assistance was also greater was in air-refuelling, which the Europeans had low capability of.¹¹³ The US offered this decisive backing to some small countries that were flying sorties, particularly to Scandinavia, the Netherlands and Belgium that served to provide position ignitions. Basically, without the US air-refuelling and reconnaissance, there would have been little military effect from the NATO operations, given that the US provided the best bulks of air-refuelling that allowed aircrafts to be on station to complete both the surveillance and strike missions.

Although Washington continued to provide significant and critical support even after transferring the Libyan mission to NATO, the signal came from the strategy of 'leading from behind' was clear that the US would not always play a dominant role and the European allies should shoulder more responsibilities. To send that message around the world was meaningful to the US especially in the context of current economic pressures and domestic US debates about post-War on Terror interventions, but most importantly, it helped the US reconsider its role as a 'global policeman' and redefine the 'American way of war'. Thus whether there was a so-called 'Libyan model' that could be applied to future crisis management became an interesting question.

8.4 The so-called 'Libyan model' and the future of NATO

As a rule of thumb, when the US is involved in a war, it always 'throws enough money, weapons and people at conflicts to guarantee an overwhelming advantage for itself and it also has the technology to do much of the fighting from afar and therefore

¹¹³ Interview with Nora Bensahel.

in relative safety' (though this was not true of Vietnam).¹¹⁴ But the Libyan war did not match this default 'American way of war'. There were many fresh elements that constituted the so-called 'Libyan model'. During the conflict, the US left its European allies to lead, taking on a limited, supporting role for the first time. Even though the Obama administration made clear it would not allow allies to fail, it contributed only enough assistance to prevent operations from failing, not enough for them to speedily succeed. Nourished by the leading thought that the Libyan war provided a likely blueprint for many future NATO operations, Kori Schake took the Libyan war as 'the clearest signal to date that the US will not do more, proportionally, than other allies when it, too, faces austerity'.¹¹⁵ From now on, America seemed likely to behave like any other ally, sitting out some of NATO's wars, and doing just enough to help other operations to succeed. The US armed forces will no longer automatically make up the difference between NATO's ambitions and European military means. As Ivo Daalder concluded, 'if there ever was a time in which the United States could always be counted on to fill the gaps that may emerge in European defence, that time is rapidly coming to an end'.¹¹⁶ Beyond the theoretical dimension, the Obama administration has declared Libya to be a demonstration of its strategic doctrine: in response to humanitarian crisis, the US will work with allies to gain international acceptance for intervention in support of indigenous forces and join a coalition to use military force. It will not play the dominant role in such coalitions. It will not support revolutionary movements without mandates from the United Nations Security Council.¹¹⁷

Some scholars such as George Joffe, viewed the US decision on 'leading from behind' as not only a promise that America was happy to see European countries deal with such conflicts as Libya on their own, but also a reminder to its European allies that they should shoulder the responsibility to take all the relevant burdens resulted from their passionate action.¹¹⁸ It is true that many European governments have long hoped for a 'European pillar', a defence capability that is less dependent on US support. Ideally, the US retrenchment would certainly increase the likelihood of European

¹¹⁴ Kori Schake (2012) p. 10.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 18.

¹¹⁶ Graig Whitlock (2012) 'NATO Allies Grapple with Shrinking Defence Budgets', *The Washington Post*, 13 January. Ivo Daalder and James Stavridis (2012).

¹¹⁷ Kori Schake (2012) p. 19.

¹¹⁸ Middle East Symposium 'One Year on from the Arab Spring?', University of Birmingham, 24 February 2012.

countries leading future missions, however, many allies perceived Libya as an unsatisfactory experience. Robert Gates pointed out ‘While every alliance member voted for the Libya mission, less than half have participated, and fewer than a third have been willing to participate in the strike mission...Frankly, many of those allies sitting on the sidelines do so not because they do not want to participate, but simply because they cannot. The military capabilities simply are not there.’¹¹⁹ This sad story made NATO's European members rethink about their inability to project force and stability. Yet Tomas Valasek believed that most Europeans seemed to lack in their DNA the sense of global responsibility, which explained their shyness in using military force. The allies seemed to have no interest in fostering their ambition to play a bigger role in their own defence. Instead, they were more satisfied with the current situation that burdens and responsibilities were shifted to the US and that they could just stay calmly under the US security umbrella. But no matter how unwilling European countries were to spend their resources and use military forces, they were unable to find a reasonable excuse to free themselves from the burden-sharing responsibility. Thus, with Washington getting tired of shouldering the unequal division and growing to be more sensitive than ever to free-riding behaviours, the European allies should start playing a more active military role if they wanted NATO to persist. The Libyan war was exactly the beginning of ‘the time’. It introduced a new definition of ‘European way of war’. It reweighed the military disparity between America and its European allies. It also marked the advent of a new round of debate over the burden-sharing problem.

The ‘American way of war’ has been the most often cited term when talking about the adversaries that NATO has fought in the past 20 years. Washington enjoys unmatched capability, raising the standard of performance so high that no other country dares to engage even in those military operations for which they have sufficient capability. On one hand, America has never been reluctant to pour such resources as personnel, money and weapons into conflicts; on the other, America has casted a long shadow not only within NATO but also around the world due to its unbeatable strength.

¹¹⁹ Donna Miles (2011) ‘NATO Members Re-evaluate Contributions To Libya’, *US Fed News*, 14 June.

*The US has 11 aircraft carrier battle groups; no other nation has more than one. The US also has three times as many modern battle tanks, four times the number of fourth-generation tactical aircraft (and is already fielding the fifth generation), more than three times as many naval cruisers and destroyers, 19 times as many tanker aircraft and 48 times as many unmanned aerial vehicles as any other country.*¹²⁰

As a result, some European allies, who regarded 'unable to perform as perfectly as America does' as 'unable to perform', hesitated to advocate the 'European way of war'. Nonetheless, the risk of fighting without America's weapons was not as terrified as envisaged. The war fought to the European doctrine might bring troops in closer contact with the enemy, inflict more civilian casualties, and last longer, making it harder for the governments to keep public support. But these foreseeable difficulties were less knotty than the potential trouble that might be created if they refused to act without US participation. It was because that the refusal means nothing but those members failed to intervene to protect people from autocratic governments, investigate or even destroy suspect nuclear facilities, and support freedom and democracy taking roots. It became clear that European allies had no better choice than taking necessary actions even without US support.

In fact, the situation was quite promising when taking the evaluation of European militaries into account. 'The European allies have a million more troops under arms than the US...Any one of the major European militaries could have defeated any of the adversaries that NATO fought in the past 20 years. In combination, the Europeans' fighting power is more than adequate to impose their will even in some of the world's most challenging battlegrounds such as the Middle East.'¹²¹ However, Europe underestimated its own strength for most of the time, relying on the American pledge to defend its allies. Thus, most NATO countries were well below the Alliance's guideline of spending 2% of GDP on defence. In 2011, only Greece (2.4%) and UK (2.6%) spend above the threshold, while the US represents 4.8% of GDP in its defence budget. Defence spending per capita in the US is nearly double that of any NATO ally, at \$2,062 per person, followed by Norway (\$1,035), UK (\$970), France (\$663) and Denmark (\$635).¹²²

¹²⁰ Kori Schake (2012) p. 7.

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 5.

¹²² 'Financial and Economic Data Relating to NATO Defence', NATO, 24 February 2014. 'The

It seems that the unequal division between American and European military outputs is more like a self-created obstacle due to the unwillingness of European allies to increase their contributions. But this is not the whole story. The disparity between military capabilities does exist. Taking the Libyan war as an example, although the US took its stance of not playing a leading role, 'it fired nearly all the cruise missiles that destroyed Libya's air defences in advance of allied strike missions, provided the great majority of the aerial tankers and nearly all of the surveillance and electronic warfare elements on which allied fights depended, and flew 25% of all sorties'.¹²³ The Libyan operation was illustrative that it could not have been fought in the way it was without the US support. However, this does not mean that the war could not have been fought at all. As is mentioned above, the Libyan defence budget reached only \$1 billion in the year before Gaddafi failed, which was approximately 2% of Britain's. No one could really doubt that the European military forces led by Britain and France was unable to force the capitulation of a dictator and find a way to succeed. Thus, the European allies are not unable, but unwilling, to intervene to protect persecuted civilians the same as the US does, removing the veil of the long-standing debate about the burden-sharing problem.

Kori Schake emphasised three new elements that made the current round of burden-sharing debate more serious than previous ones. 'First, the major threats to the US are no longer European in origin...Second, US armed forces find coalition warfare more and more difficult and decreasingly helpful...The third and most important reason...is that pressures for austerity are likely to endure, not only in Europe but also in the US.'¹²⁴ Others believed that the core variable refers to America's own strategic adjustment—it changes to style itself more as a Pacific than a European power. In the President Obama's 2012 review of military strategy, he expressed the will of focusing on more pressing threats in Asia and the Middle East whilst hoping that Europe would take control of its own security. The President also sent a message to the US allies in Asia that American forces there would grow and new American marines would be deployed. Europe, on the opposite, did not receive any substantive reassurance from

Military Balance 2011', International Institute for Strategic Studies. Also see Appendix 4 'Defence expenditures as a percentage of gross domestic product'.

¹²³ Kori Schake (2012) p. 9.

¹²⁴ Ibid., pp. 10-11.

the US but a vague promise that ‘We’re going to continue investing in our critical partnerships and alliances, including NATO, which has demonstrated time and again—most recently in Libya—that it is a force multiplier’.¹²⁵ And even worse, the Pentagon’s new ‘defence strategic guidance’ required the US to cut down the maintenance of its troops in Europe while denounced the dissatisfied performance of European forces.¹²⁶ Many of the 80,000 US personnel stationed in Europe would be withdrawn, probably pushing the alliance back to its earlier model that no permanent presence of US forces in Europe was guaranteed. Hence Freddy Gray called Obama ‘the Pacific President’ who was taking a decisive turn away from Europe in his second term.¹²⁷ The current US foreign policy tends to focus more on the Asian Pacific region, yet it does not ignore Europe completely. On February 16, 2013, President Obama gave the annual state-of-the-union message to Congress, announcing that America and the EU would begin talks to create a transatlantic free-trade zone.¹²⁸ This proposal was not new, but reemphasised how top Europe ranks on the list of American foreign policy. Further, although the Obama doctrine encourages US cooperation with its allies in Asia, it had little success because of mutual distrust. Thus, European allies remain to be the priority of the US strategic arrangements, and consolidated transatlantic relations continue to serve US interests.

In the long run, NATO’s future depends in large part on whether the European allies find their willingness to play a role commensurate with their strength. But the process of transformation will take a long time in practice. Therefore, in the short run, a compromising mechanism among NATO members will prevail, requiring the ‘a la carte approach’ to be accepted as part of how NATO works. One lesson learned from Libya was that not all members would join all future NATO operations (only 8 out of 28 allies followed the French and UK lead in bombing Libya). NATO members, who are no longer unified by a common enemy like the Soviet Union, begin to worry about different threats. And it becomes harder for allies to agree to fight wars that they care unequally passionately. Thus, NATO should allow some members to stay on the sidelines and contribute only symbolically (give their approval for NATO to unfold

¹²⁵ President Obama (2012) ‘Remarks by the President on the Defence Strategic Review’, 5 January.

¹²⁶ ‘Sustaining US Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defence’, *The White House*, 3 January 2012.

¹²⁷ Freddy Gray (2013) ‘The Pacific President’, *The Spectator*, 19 January.

¹²⁸ ‘The State of the Union: A House Divided’, *The Economist*, 16 February 2013.

the operation legitimately), rather than demanding every ally to take an effective role in NATO's every military mission. Some people are opposed to the 'division of labour', for it would upgrade the risk of moral hazard in future military operations. However, this compromising solution is still better than the alternative that NATO members fail to launch, let alone accomplish missions altogether because some allies refuse to participate. Moreover, with regard to the strong possibility that Washington would lead fewer operations in the future, European allies should design a more agreeable rule of transatlantic cooperation in specific missions. They should take the initiative to make their military plans more explicit about how much support they expect from the US, and negotiate with the US on how and what kind of assistance the US should provide during operations. In short, to see NATO persist and capable of dealing with more issues in the future, European countries should make more contributions to the Alliance, and to the sustainment of a healthy relationship with the US.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

9.1 Introduction

Ever since the end of the Cold War, there have been continuing debates over US commitment to NATO both at home and abroad. After addressing key rounds of debates by researching in some depth the Clinton administration's recommitment to NATO in the aftermath of the Cold War, and the operations in Kosovo, Afghanistan and in particular Libya in the previous chapters, this chapter moves on to discuss the contemporary debate over US commitment to NATO in the context of the growing burden-sharing problems within the Alliance, unambiguous US policy of 'Pivot to Asia', the potential US decision on bypassing NATO to resolve the crisis of Syria, and the possible utilisation of NATO to contain Russia in the case of Ukraine. The aim of this chapter is to draw out relevant evidences from all chapters to support the author's interpretation of US policy on NATO while looking forward to 'predict' the future of NATO, including whether 'Smart Defence' can resolve US concerns over this 'two-tiered' alliance and whether the recent Ukrainian crisis can inject new life into NATO and become another watershed in the history of the Alliance.

9.2 NATO after the Cold War

9.2.1 The first debate

In the immediate aftermath of the Cold War, Americans had high expectations of seeing the US scaling down its international commitments, raising concerns about whether the US should remain committed to NATO, the most prominent legacy of the Cold War. Chapter Four discussed this first post-Cold War round of debate over US commitment to the transatlantic alliance, focusing on why the Clinton administration supported the continuation of NATO. Generally speaking, Chapter Four mainly argued that the reason why the Clinton administration was in favour of NATO's persistence was because firstly, NATO was still relevant to the post-Cold War world

as there were new security threats on the rise though the Soviet threat disappeared. Secondly, to remain committed to NATO was in line with the Clinton doctrine which required the US to be aware of ‘the consequences to our security of letting conflicts fester and spread’ and to ‘be prepared to do’ something ‘where our values and our interests are at stake and where we can make a difference’.¹ More importantly, the Clinton administration’s judgment was also based on the crucial fact that maintaining NATO also meant maintaining US influence in the wider European region. Thirdly, after going through ‘compromise, coalition, competition and confusion’, internal government officials involved in this bargaining game eventually agreed on a uniform policy, preferring to see the US continuing its support to NATO.²

Therefore, the Clinton administration not only committed itself to the continuation of NATO, but also began to sponsor a major programme of NATO renewal and enlargement. On the micro level, officials in the White House, Congress and Pentagon had consulted heatedly about why, how and when NATO expanded, and which countries could gain membership of NATO in the first place. The reason why NATO should expand also implied the urgency that NATO should transform in order to adapt to the post-Cold War security environment. The 1991 Rome Summit put forward a ‘New Strategic Concept’, granting NATO new purpose in the face of new threats and requiring NATO transformation including expansion of its membership and participation in ‘out-of-area’ operations.

9.2.2 The first opportunity

Bosnia saw NATO’s first ‘out-of-area’ action in the post-Cold War era, but Kosovo was the first formal test of the just transformed ‘new’ alliance that had its membership expanded and its tasks broadened ‘out-of-area’. Chapter Five explored in depth the case of Kosovo, arguing that Kosovo provided the first opportunity to get a clearer understanding of both the strength and weakness of the Alliance. The success of the Kosovo operation was mainly attributed to NATO, which provided institutional benefits and incomparable military capability. But at the same time, Kosovo also

¹ President Clinton (1999) ‘Remarks on United States Foreign Policy in San Francisco’, 26 February.

² Graham T. Allison (1969) ‘Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis’, *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 63, No. 3, pp. 707-708.

revealed inherent problems of the Alliance, especially the tensions between Washington and European capitals over burden-sharing responsibility. Thus, in terms of US attitude towards NATO, Chapter Five concluded that Washington would like to utilise NATO to deal with crises when the advantage outweighed the disadvantage of employing the Alliance, and that Washington might become hesitant to do so if those NATO problems discovered in Kosovo could not be properly handled in the future.

The prediction that the US might decrease its commitment to NATO after Kosovo proved to be a very real possibility: when the US suffered terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, the Bush administration decided to bypass NATO and choose an *ad hoc* coalition to intervene in Afghanistan in order to avoid the operational constraints that the Alliance might impose.

9.2.3 The first real challenge

Chapter Six addressed NATO's engagement after Kosovo including the Afghanistan mission. President Bush's rejection to invoke Article Five of NATO charter after 9/11 made the first real challenge to the continuation of the Alliance, provoking a new round of debate over the purpose of NATO. By analysing the Afghanistan mission, this chapter firstly argued that if NATO could not play a role in dealing with new threats including terrorism that was shapeless and without fixed locations, it would become irrelevant to the contemporary security environment. However, with the objective of the Afghanistan mission changed from countering terrorism to reconstructing the country, President Bush, especially in his second term, recognised the importance of NATO and began to assist NATO with a takeover of the Afghanistan mission. The apparent shift in the Bush administration's attitude towards NATO enabled the author to predict that NATO would shoulder more responsibility in carrying out 'out-of-area' operations after Afghanistan and that the US would be willing to utilise NATO to accomplish crisis management tasks in the future. Although actually European allies did not want a global role for NATO, not to mention a global 'War on Terror', their participation in Afghanistan made the US relatively optimistic about the effectiveness of NATO.

In addition, after inviting seven countries, namely Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia to join NATO at the 2004 Istanbul Summit and announcing memberships of Albania and Croatia at the 2008 Bucharest Summit, NATO continued to transform by adopting a new Strategic Concept 'Active Engagement, Modern Defence' at the 2010 Lisbon Summit, which was a clear and resolute statement on NATO's enduring purpose and fundamental security tasks. With respect to all these evolvments, Chapter Six concluded that continuous internal reform would be a key to ensure the relevance as well as the persistence of NATO in the future.

9.2.4 The first 'real' change

Although to some extent President Bush's behaviour in his second term showed his determination to reinvigorate the transatlantic relationship, the possibility of making NATO return to the 'good old ways' immediately after the Bush years and especially the Iraq war was not real. Chapters Seven and Eight studied the case of Libya in such context. Without doubt, in the case of Libya, the US was internally divided on the issue. Hence, Libya saw the US unexpectedly reluctant to intervene at the very beginning, not to mention to adopt NATO to conduct the mission immediately. The 'pulling and hauling' among the *Obamians* was crucial as to whether to participate in the Libyan mission. By researching in depth the debate within the government, these chapters argued that the reason why the domestic consensus ultimately tilted in favour of the intervention hawks was because Washington valued the 'Responsibility to Protect'.

Although the US finally participated in the Libyan operation, it quickly transferred the mission to NATO and started 'leading from behind'. There seemed to be a profound shift in the US attitude towards intervention, raising concerns about whether the 'American way of war' had ended. The chapters on Libya argued that there was a change in the transatlantic relationship, as the European allies took the lead in meeting security challenges close to Europe whilst the US played a limited, supporting role for the first time. But this change was not 'real', for NATO's operation in Libya actually witnessed no prominent change in the unequal division between American and

European military outputs.³ This enabled the author to argue that the ‘Libyan Model’ was not a real innovation to cure NATO’s problems; instead, it further revealed the long-lasting tension between the US and its allies over burden-sharing responsibility. The inherent problems of the Alliance were repeated in the post-Cold War period, firstly in Kosovo then in Afghanistan, now peaking at Libya. This again affirmed the author’s argument that the future of NATO would be promising only when European members changed to share more burdens coming from “hard” combat missions’.⁴

9.3 Theories

9.3.1 Alliance Theory

According to neorealist theory on alliances, ‘states facing an external threat will align with others to oppose the states posing the threat’.⁵ That was exactly what happened during the Cold War period when NATO was built up to balance the USSR. Similarly, when the Soviet threat subsided, NATO was expected to disappear, as traditional Alliance Theory believed if alignment were formed because of a threat, it would falter in the absence of a threat. However, NATO is not a ‘traditional’ alliance, though in terms of original design, it is not different from other alliances that are formed in the face of a common enemy. Specifically, NATO also enjoys some unique features that no other alliance can display: its member states share common values in addition to common interests. With a belief in the natural affinity of democracies, members of NATO view each other as inherently good states that have no intention to pose a threat to one another. This enables NATO members to develop a high level of both organisational and institutional cooperation, which in the end help characterise NATO as a symbol of credibility. According to Walt, once the alliance became a symbol of credibility, it was more likely to persist.⁶

To clarify further, those who predicted an end to NATO after the end of the Cold War took too narrow a perspective of the Alliance’s function. NATO started transforming as soon as the security environment changed, which quickly increased its relevance to

³ ‘NATO After Libya’, *The New York Times*, 18 April 2012.

⁴ Robert Gates (2011) ‘Reflections on the Status and Future of the Transatlantic Alliance’.

⁵ Stephen Walt (1987) *The Origins of Alliances*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, pp. 28-29.

⁶ Stephen Walt (1997) ‘Why Alliances Endure or Collapse’, *Survival*, Vol. 39, pp. 156-179.

the post-Cold War world. With the constant evolvement of ‘New Strategic Concepts’, the Alliance was no longer a pure regional defensive organisation, instead, it became a diplomatic and political alliance that was capable of dealing with issues ‘out-of-area’. In addition, as the fundamental idea of institutionalism implied, once a regime was set up, there were both internal and external incentives to perpetuate it rather than start anew when problems arise.⁷ NATO members have already spent a long time learning how to ‘work as one’, thus there was no reason for them to abandon the existing structures and to form an alternative alliance, not to mention that creating a new regime was more costly than maintaining the old one. In short, NATO will persist as long as its members continue to regard the Alliance as a symbol of credibility and wish to transform NATO as necessary to deal with new problems.

Although NATO’s superiority can explain why NATO persisted in the post-Cold War period, it is not enough to convince the US to remain committed to the transatlantic alliance, for US foreign policy-making on a specific issue is influenced by both the overall trend in US foreign policy and the ‘pulling and hauling’ among players positioned hierarchically within the government. Thus to understand US policy on NATO, these two levels of analysis should be both paid attention to.

9.3.2 Overall US foreign policy on NATO: the realist perspective

On the macro level, the US foreign policy has long been influenced by interactions between realism and liberal internationalism. Before the turn of the 20th century, the US adopted ‘non-entanglement’ as the guidance for its foreign policy, which prevented Washington from participating in any international organisation. The US first commitment to NATO in 1949 was regarded as a watershed in US foreign policy, as it not only marked the end of the US anti-entangling alliance tradition, but also demonstrated that the US was prepared to get into warfare to favour allies. Although non-entangling tradition was abandoned completely in the post-Cold War period, US foreign policy was not free from the influence of realism. Hence, this section focuses on how to interpret US foreign policy in the post-Cold War era from the realist perspective.

⁷ Robert McCalla (1996) ‘NATO’s Persistence after the Cold War’, *International Organisation*, Vol. 50, No. 3, p. 463.

First of all, the most obvious reason why NATO persisted after the end of the Cold War was because of the need to contain Russia. Although NATO had the PfP programme with Russia, which seemed to lay a solid foundation for Russia to join the Alliance, in fact the PfP would never bring Russia into NATO. The likelihood of granting membership to Russia was always remote, regardless of how often NATO leaders had indicated their wish to see Russia becoming a full member of the Alliance in the future. It was simply because that 'Russia's membership would constitute a significant counterweight to American influence and dilute the alliance's cohesion, complicating decision-making procedures'.⁸ Moreover, although Washington had established a strategic partnership with Moscow, it understood that the difficulty in using that strategic interest-based partnership as a policy tool for achieving the policy objectives set out by the US administration was insurmountable, given the fact that 'all partnerships entail prior acceptance of the different positions and are dependent on both sides having something to gain'.⁹ What is worse, the recent Ukrainian crisis affirmed that 'there can be no return to a "strategic partnership" between NATO and Russia so long as Russia's actions threaten European security'.¹⁰ In other words, the US, the leader of the transatlantic alliance, would probably never regard Russia as a partner in the same way as the other NATO allies.

For example, in the case of Kosovo, Russia was very skeptical about the intervention and more than once warned the West that it would veto the proposal if it was raised at the UN Security Council. Russia also continued to press the US and NATO even after NATO actually engaged in Kosovo. What the US and its allies learned from Kosovo was that their expectation of seeing Russia becoming a part of the new order was ridiculous. Russian leaders were clearly not those who would easily alter their behaviours or objectives according to what the others asked for. The same story was repeated many times in the 21st century, including Russia's objection against the invitation of Georgia and Ukraine to join NATO, and its suspicion of almost all NATO operations. Russia regarded US policy in the Middle East as reckless and

⁸ Luca Ratti (2009) 'Back to the Future? International Relations Theory and NATO-Russia Relations Since the End of the Cold War', *International Journal*, Vol. 64, No. 2, p. 420.

⁹ Trine Flockhart (2014) 'Order through Partnerships: Sustaining Liberal Order in a Post-Western World', *Liberal Order in a Post-Western World*, Washington: Transatlantic Academy, p. 142.

¹⁰ Martin Butora, *et al.* (2014) 'Collective Defence and Common Security: Twin Pillars of the Atlantic Alliance', *Chatham House Report*, 10 June.

irresponsible and believed that it should not be involved in the US-led 'War on Terror'. In the case of Libya, although Russia did not prevent the UN Security Council resolutions, it initially opposed the intervention and subsequently criticised the 'disproportionate use of force'.¹¹ In addition, while Washington favoured sanctions and resolutions calling Assad to quit, Moscow refused to support such moves. The 'preventive' strikes against Serbia, Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya reinforced in the minds of many Russians the image of Washington that the US became predatory and aggressive. In other words, 'America is seen as Russia's enemy because it tries to dominate globally'.¹² Hence, even nowadays, Russia continues to spend resources monitoring the Americans, British and others as if the Cold War never ended, and as if 'personal or political enemies were a threat to President Vladimir Putin and the oligarchy through which he rules still-imperial Russia'.¹³ With regard to all these unsatisfactory interactions between the West and Russia, it was necessary and even imperative for Washington to get prepared for a possible confrontation with Moscow, which might flare up at any time. In this sense, NATO was clearly the best ready-made tool to achieve that end. In conclusion, realism did not bring the transatlantic alliance any new purpose, making NATO still an anti-Russia organisation in the post-Cold War period.

9.3.3 Overall US foreign policy on NATO: the liberal internationalist perspective

Similarly, it is also necessary to understand how to interpret US foreign policy in the post-Cold War era from the liberal internationalist perspective. NATO was built up in accordance with liberal internationalist claims, given that it was designed as a multilateral platform for the US and its allies to discuss issues relevant to their safety, and a toolbox for them to pick up effective tools to achieve collective security. However, liberal internationalism was not the most appropriate way to explain the formation of NATO, as the Alliance was originally established due to defensive purposes. With respect to this, NATO did lose its purpose in the post-Cold War era because it had successfully transformed from a pure regional defensive organisation

¹¹ Security Council 6528th Meeting, 4 May 2011.

¹² Dmitry Shlapentokh (2012) 'Russia and the War on Terror: The Multiplicity of Roles', *International Policy Digest*, 9 January.

¹³ David Andelman (2014) 'Russia's War on Terror is Cold: Column', *USA Today*, 28 January.

into a diplomatic and political alliance that was capable of dealing with issues ‘out-of-area’. For example, the 1991 ‘New Strategic Concept’ enabled NATO to get involved in any conflicting place where instabilities arose; the 2002 new Military Concept for Defence against Terrorism helped NATO adapt to the new security environment by linking the role of NATO to counterterrorism activities; the 2010 Strategic Concept further advanced NATO to be a more relevant and capable organisation to fulfil more broader tasks including collective defence, crisis management and cooperative security. All these contributed to NATO’s ‘increasing robustness, adaptability and vitality’ in the face of ‘repeated missions’.¹⁴

No matter whether NATO’s continuation was more based on realist or liberal internationalist purposes, the US commitment to NATO was nonetheless influenced by liberal internationalist considerations. President Clinton, who was characterised as ‘Wilsonian’, generally preferred the liberal internationalist approach. Hence, even though he noticed that many Americans were asking the administration to scale down US international commitments immediately after the end of the Cold War, he chose to sponsor a major programme of NATO renewal and enlargement, for he understood that the US should never live in the shadow of non-entanglement again. That was also why Clinton supported NATO’s ‘out-of area’ operations in Bosnia and Kosovo where UN Security Council resolutions called for international cooperation to protect innocent civilians. President Bush also paid close attention to multilateral cooperation, though he had announced the bypassing of NATO after 9/11, which was once regarded as a renaissance of US unilateralism. With the objective of the Afghanistan mission changed from countering terrorism to reconstructing the country, Bush began to turn to the Alliance in 2003 when NATO assumed the command of the international security assistance force as he recognised the irreplaceable role of NATO in implementing post-war tasks.¹⁵ He also publically expressed his support for an expeditionary transatlantic alliance in 2001 and issued a policy of pursuing NATO membership for Ukraine and Georgia. President Obama’s preference for the liberal internationalist track was clearly demonstrated in his grand strategy. Specifically,

¹⁴ Patricia Weitsman (2014) *Waging War: Alliances, Coalitions, and Institutions of Interstate Violence*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, p. 190.

¹⁵ Rebecca Cruise (2009) ‘NATO and Collective Security in Europe’ in Isaiah Wilson and James Forest (ed.) *Handbook of Defence Politics: International and Comparative Perspectives*, London: Routledge, pp. 88-102.

Obama's first term was marked by a reset policy that sought to demonstrate multilateralism, aiming to improve the image of Washington 'damaged' by his predecessor. Moreover, in the case of Libya, Obama quickly declared the transition of the Libyan mission to NATO, making US behaviour in Libya hailed as a multilateral rather than a unilateral effort. Obama also made a strategic decision that Washington would play 'a larger and long-term role' in shaping the Asia Pacific region and its future.¹⁶ This of course sent a signal that the US aimed at strengthening multilateral cooperation with other countries not only in Europe but also around the world. As a global power, the US relied on 'a worldwide network of alliance arrangements', and NATO was thus 'one of the many moving parts of US global strategy'.¹⁷ Crucially, Washington felt the benefits of NATO: 'Working with allies boosts legitimacy, spreads the burden of intervention and relieves the pressure of overstretch in the light of America's multiple global commitments'.¹⁸

If US foreign policy were merely guided by realism, the US would hardly remain committed to NATO. That was because, from the realist perspective, Washington was not really threatened and US interests were not always at stake in all those operations NATO conducted during the post-Cold War era. Similarly, if US foreign policy were merely influenced by liberal internationalism, the US would not be willing to spend so many resources to support the continuation of a 'two-tiered' alliance. The US could, instead, engage more closely in a more liberal, more multilateral organisation. The reality was always much more complicated than what it was ideally supposed to be. It was impossible to clarify which approach, the realist or the liberal internationalist one, played a greater role in US foreign policy-making process. But anyway, considering that the Russian threat was imminent especially when taking into account the recent Ukrainian crisis, and that 'there is no better place to go (than NATO), when the US needs help in the world', the US should and had better remain committed to NATO.

¹⁶ President Obama (2011) Remarks by President Obama to the Australian Parliament, 17 November.

¹⁷ Mark Webber, Ellen Hallams and Martin Smith (2014) 'Repairing NATO's Motors', *International Affairs*, Vol. 90, No. 4, p. 783.

¹⁸ Ibid.

9.3.4 The Bureaucratic Politics Model

As is mentioned above, to understand US policy on a given issue, it is also essential to look at the internal bargaining game among players involved in this specific game. The ‘pulling and hauling’ was vital to understand why the US pursues certain foreign policy, who might influence it, and how it is conceived. For example, on the issue of NATO enlargement during the Clinton years, officials in the White House, Congress and Pentagon had consulted heatedly about why, how and when NATO expanded, and which countries could gain membership of NATO in the first place. Without the support from key players such as Clinton, Anthony Lake, Madeleine Albright, Strobe Talbott, Richard Holbrooke and Jeremy Rosner, NATO expansion would not be realised in time. The bureaucratic wrangling also exerted great influence on US participation in operations in Kosovo, Afghanistan and Libya. For instance, it was Albright’s efforts to push for a US or NATO ultimatum at a meeting of top US foreign policy advisers that finally helped facilitate the peace talks at Rambouillet, which laid a solid foundation for Clinton to announce intervention in Kosovo. In the case of Afghanistan, there was an internal debate arose over whether and how the US should exit from Afghanistan. Some congressmen including Representative Louise Slaughter, Lamar Alexander, Senator John Cornyn and Lindsey Graham openly worried about US ‘exit strategy’. Hence, without the Obama administration’s adequate consultation with the Congress, the result of which was to conduct a reassessment in December 2010 to reach a conclusion about the pace of withdrawing forces, Obama’s strategy on Afghanistan would not be implemented smoothly.

Similarly, Libya also witnessed a heated debate among the *Obamians* over whether it was worth getting involved in a third Middle East war. President Obama was unprecedentedly pressured to issue a more delicate policy, one which could solve the dilemma of showing US willingness to participate in multilateral operations when Washington was overstretched both militarily and financially and when no direct, first-order US interests were at stake. It was the bureaucratic wrangling between two camps, one led by Robert Gates and Thomas Donilon and the other led by Hillary Clinton, Susan Rice and Samantha Power, that provided Obama with a better

overview of possible resolutions to the Libyan crisis, otherwise, Obama would not be able to issue a just and reasonable policy so fast.

In short, US commitment to NATO should be analysed by looking at US foreign policy-making on two levels. On the macro level, the overall US foreign policy was guided by interactions between realism and liberal internationalism; and on the micro level, US policy on a specific issue was more like an outcome of the bargaining game participated in by governmental officials.

9.3.5 The explanation for the US commitment to NATO

Generally speaking, the US has been committed to NATO since the end of the Cold War. Although both internal and external debate or even criticism about US commitment to the Alliance has never stopped, it does not really alter US attitude towards NATO. After analysing essential cases relevant to the topic, it is now necessary to systematically outline answers to the research question of this study—Why did the US remain committed to NATO in the post-Cold War period? Firstly, the US recognises the unique value of NATO, which provides the US with legitimacy, capability and credibility to deal with crises around the world, enabling the US to exercise global leadership in every instance. Secondly, constantly influenced by the interaction between realism and liberal internationalism, the US overall foreign policy is in favour of NATO, which on one hand ensures US protection of its own interests as well as US active response to imminent threats, and on the other facilitates the spread of US-identified ‘common values’ throughout the world. Thirdly, the outcome of bureaucratic wrangling among players involved in the specific game about US policy on NATO demonstrates internal preference for US utilisation of the Alliance, further reaffirming US commitment to NATO. It is worth noting that the explanations of US commitment to NATO match the theories that are applied to this research. But more importantly, one may wonder which explanation is the most convincing one.

From the perspective of Alliance Theory, NATO is still relevant to the post-Cold War world, as it has successfully transformed to adapt to the new security environment. NATO’s high degree of organisational and institutional developments set NATO off

from traditional alliances, whereas it does not mean the Alliance's record cannot be duplicated or even approached. Even though it would be of great cost to replace NATO by creating a new institution, the plan is at least theoretically feasible. In short, NATO's unique features do not necessarily lead to US commitment to the Alliance. From the perspective of bureaucratic politics, the nature of the governmental decision-making process suggests that every policy can be described as a result of bargaining among major players involved in this specific game. While internal government officials can always exert great influence on decision-making due to their relatively direct access to the core of the game, their impact is constrained in terms of various conceptions of national, organisational and personal goals. That is also why the outcome of the 'pulling and hauling' is more often depicted as a 'compromise' rather than a 'consensus'. With respect to this, to what extent are those specific 'compromise, coalition, competition and confusion' really crucial to the broader US foreign policy-making, which matters to the whole future of the country? The bureaucratic wrangling can only give an insight into concrete steps toward final decision-making, not an effective guideline for long-term policy choices. As US commitment to NATO is a long-term policy rather than a short-term expedient, it is hard to say that results of those bargaining games determine US attitude towards the Alliance. Bureaucratic politics can only explain decision-making on a given issue, not enough to explain the overall direction for US foreign policy. Thus, to understand the primary impetus behind US commitment to NATO in the post-Cold War era, it is best to resort to the interaction between realism and liberal internationalism, which provides the general guidance for US decision-making. In other words, it is the interaction between these two major foreign policy guidance that provides a broad picture of possible directions for US foreign policy. In fact, even on the micro level, most of the time bureaucrats are actually divided according to their different preferences for either the realist or liberal internationalist approach. In other words, essentially those 'compromises' are microcosms of how realism and liberal internationalism interact with each other. In this sense, the most influential factor to US commitment to NATO in the post-Cold War period, which works both on the macro and micro levels, is the interaction between realism and liberal internationalism.

9.4 Syria and Ukraine

The overwhelming explanation for US intervention in crises such as Libya was based on humanitarian claims which were regarded as more important factors than realistic evaluation on self-interest. As Gareth Evans, co-chair of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) echoed, ‘the Libyan case was, at least at the outset, a textbook case of the ‘R2P’ norm working exactly as it was supposed to’.¹⁹ In terms of humanitarian considerations, Syria would undoubtedly attract US attention in the same way as Libya. Yet so far the US has not decided to get involved militarily even though the Syrian death toll mounted day by day. The possibility of intervening in Syria in the future is also low. According to the Gallup poll conducted on September 6, 2013, 51% of Americans opposed military action ‘to attempt to end the conflict’ if ‘all economic and diplomatic efforts fail to end the civil war in Syria’.²⁰ One obvious reason why Washington hesitated to intervene was because it had limited tools available to effect the change in Syria, a country with very effective air force and air defences. Ideally, the operation might become possible if Washington could generate military support from its allies. However, the lesson of the previous cooperation including the just-concluded Libyan mission suggested the US should carefully consider the adoption of NATO, for the task literally assigned to all members would mainly fall on the shoulders of the US in reality.

After the August 2013 chemical attack on Gouta, a US-led military intervention seemed to be in the offing. However, ‘no sooner had US President Barack Obama declared his intention to respond to the chemical attack with the use of force than a powerful constituency within and beyond the West mobilised against the imminent war’.²¹ More ironically, the US and European countries were relieved when Russia put forward a plan to place Syria’s chemical weapons under international supervision. Yet the destruction of chemical weapons would be only marginally consequential to the resolution of the crisis. The recent Geneva negotiations in January-February 2014,

¹⁹ Gareth Evans (2011) ‘Ending Mass Atrocity Crimes: The Responsibility to Protect Balance Sheet After Libya’, 31 July.

²⁰ Andrew Dugan (2013) ‘US Support for Action in Syria Is Low vs. Past Conflicts’, *Gallup Politics*, 06 September.

²¹ Nathalie Tocci (2014) ‘On Power and Norms: Libya, Syria and the Responsibility to Protect’, *2013-2014 Paper Series*, No. 2, Washington: Transatlantic Academy, p. 5.

which aimed to call for unfettered humanitarian access, also ended in failure due to the objection by the Syrian regime and Russia. Although Russia was to blame for ‘failing to take a single step towards implementing the Geneva agreement’, it was not the main block to progress in Syria.²² More importantly, the US and its allies are unwilling to issue coercive measures in the same way as they did in Libya, given that ‘the Assad regime, backed by Russia and Iran, is incommensurably more resilient than its Libyan counterpart’.²³

If Syria were a case where costs outweighed benefits, which led to US ‘indifference’ to the crisis, Ukraine would conversely attract sufficient US attention in the first place regarding the fact that it was a mission of greater strategic importance and benefits. However, despite imposing sanctions on Russian firms and individuals close to President Vladimir Putin and suspending military cooperation with Russia, the US did very little to solve the crisis. With the Russian troops moving forward, the Ukraine crisis has ‘created the most significant crisis in US-Russia relations since the end of the Cold War’.²⁴ If Syrian use of chemical weapons did not cross a ‘red line’ to urge the US to strike the Assad regime, this time Russia’s unprovoked action in Ukraine is very likely to anger President Obama to seek military means. The Ukrainian crisis makes for fretful times in the Baltic states which joined NATO in 2004. Now these two ex-Soviet republics worry about being the next target of Putin’s irredentism. Considering that today’s Baltics ‘are all small and have undergone a deep economic slump’ and ‘depend entirely on NATO for air defence’, the US as the leader of NATO, is expected to do something to stop Russia’s aggressive action.²⁵ In other words, Ukraine provides the US with a chance to reconsider how far it is willing to tolerate the Russian president who sees the establishment of a Eurasian Union as his ultimate goal. Hence the domestic appeal to Obama becomes serious as many feel it is time to stop Putin pursuing a foreign policy strongly at odds with Western interests firstly in Syria and now in Ukraine.

²² Ben Hoyle (2014) ‘Putin Halts Break-Up Poll to Haul Ukraine Back from Civil War’, *The Times*, 8 May.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

²⁴ James Goldgeier (2014) ‘US-Russia Relations’, *The State of the Transatlantic World 2014*, Washington: Transatlantic Academy, p. 27.

²⁵ ‘NATO Scrambles to Reassure and Protect Its Eastern Allies from Russia’, *The Economist*, 3 May 2014.

However, according to George Friedman, the US does not have interests in Ukraine that justify a war, and neither Washington nor Moscow is in a position militarily to fight a war.²⁶ Whether Russia's annexation of Crimea and its military deployments in Ukraine go beyond the US 'bottom line' and may eventually cause US direct military response remains ambiguous, yet the transatlantic alliance has an important role to play.²⁷ Apparently, the Ukraine crisis helps revive NATO's central role as a counterweight to Moscow and 'persuade NATO to move forces closer to the frontier'.²⁸ The Alliance was designed, as the old phrase went, 'to keep the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans down'.²⁹ Putin is now acting more like a Cold War antagonist, arguing that 'Russia has the right to defend Russians everywhere'.³⁰ Putin has offered a new mission: 'to restore the country's greatness, which he says was surrendered by weak leaders who were tricked by the West'. Thereby Putin regards Ukraine as an opportunity to 'change status'.³¹ Whether Russia can seize this opportunity to keep Ukraine out of NATO and guarantee long-term Russian influence in the east of the country is unclear, nonetheless, Russia's aggression undoubtedly offers an opportunity to enhance the cohesion of the transatlantic alliance.

After all these years of debate over the relevance of NATO to the post-Cold War world, NATO at least has a purpose today: to contain Russia. A poll taken in March 2014 showed that 50% of Americans believed that the US and Russia were heading back toward a Cold War.³² In this sense, it seems that the Alliance has circled back to where it started. With regard to NATO's 'new' purpose, the Ukraine crisis helps bring the US and European members together again. Over the past two decades, most of the European countries have been less interested in the former Soviet states than the US which 'maintained a more pro-active and explicitly political stance on the region'.³³

²⁶ George Friedman (2014) 'US Defence Policy in the Wake of the Ukrainian Affair', *STRATFOR Global Intelligence*, 8 April.

²⁷ Kateryna Pishchikova (2014) 'Ukraine and Transatlantic Relations', *The State of the Transatlantic World 2014*, Washington: Transatlantic Academy, p. 31.

²⁸ Steven Erlanger (2014) 'Russian Aggression Puts NATO in Spotlight', *The New York Times*, 18 March. 'NATO Scrambles to Reassure and Protect Its Eastern Allies from Russia', 3 May 2014.

²⁹ David Reynolds (ed.) (1994) *The Origins of the Cold War in Europe: International Perspectives*, New Haven: Yale University Press, p. 13.

³⁰ Steven Erlanger (2014).

³¹ Ben Hoyle and Lettice Crawley Peck (2014) 'Nostalgia Trip—Putin Taps Soviet Mood to Tighten Rule', *The Times*, 2 May.

³² Rebecca Riffkin (2014) 'Half of Americans Say US Headed Back to Cold War', *Gallup Politics*, 27 March.

³³ Kateryna Pishchikova (2014) p. 31.

Yet as the crisis in Ukraine has unfolded, the Europeans realise it is now imperative to clarify their strategic position on the region and strengthen their coordination with the US on ways forward. At a recent security conference in Tallinn, General Riho Terras, the Estonia defence chief, expressed his willingness and determination to see Europeans sending ground troops to the Baltic: 'We need to see the German flag here. Some Leopard tanks would do very nicely.'³⁴ On the US side, as President Obama emphasised, the US also understands the merit of transatlantic cooperation, thereby will uphold its commitment to NATO.³⁵ Ukraine gives the US an opportunity to reflect on its more recent retreat towards a policy of putting its weight behind the Europeans' efforts, increasing the possibility of more intimate transatlantic cooperation.

In short, although the Ukraine crisis shows the limitations of NATO that so far has not seriously looked at military options when its candidate is clearly threatened, it 'is a complete reminder of why NATO is useful'.³⁶ In other words, 'NATO thus seems to be living by the promise of its guarantee of mutual defence'.³⁷ As NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen stated at the 2014 GLOBSEC forum, 'no one should doubt NATO's resolve' and the Alliance should stand up 'for a Europe that is truly whole, free and at peace' firmly grounded in the European Union and firmly connected with North American Allies through NATO.³⁸ It is possible that the Ukraine crisis will help forge a new transatlantic reset, given that NATO members and partners are spontaneously motivated to send Putin a signal that there will be a great price to pay for his aggressive actions in the region. For example, the US, the UK, Germany, France, Canada, Italy, Japan as well as the President of the European Council and President of the European Commission have suspended their participation in the preparatory meetings for the G8 summit scheduled to take place in Sochi during the summer.³⁹ Moreover, Russia may possibly be turned down from joining the OECD and the International Energy Agency. Putin's aggression, instead of embarrassing the US and the international community, is likely to be more damaging

³⁴ 'NATO Scrambles to Reassure and Protect Its Eastern Allies from Russia', 3 May 2014.

³⁵ President Obama (2014) Statement by the President on Ukraine, 17 March.

³⁶ Steven Erlanger (2014).

³⁷ 'NATO Scrambles to Reassure and Protect Its Eastern Allies from Russia', 3 May 2014.

³⁸ NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen (2014) 'Acceptance Remarks', GLOBSEC, 14 May.

³⁹ 'G7 Leaders Statement', *The White House*, 2 March 2014.

to himself. Obviously, the Ukraine crisis helps ‘reunite’ the US and its allies who have been frustrated with the frictions between each other for a long time. It seems that the NATO members are experiencing an existential threat like they did during the Cold War, which certainly helps divert their attention from whether they should cooperate to how best they can cooperate. Now, by giving NATO the old but new purpose of attacking a common enemy, Ukraine is likely to inject new life into the transatlantic alliance. The fast-evolving crisis in Ukraine may certainly become a point of no return, but whether a well-improved NATO will emerge remains to be seen, regarding that the inherent problem of burden-sharing is still a thorn in the Alliance.

9.5 The future of NATO

9.5.1 ‘Smart Defence’

The Libyan mission not only underlined the unforeseeable nature of conflicts, but also demonstrated the need for less reliance on the US for costly advanced capabilities. Although Washington was still the largest contributor to the operation, its strategy of ‘leading from behind’ in Libya at least sent a message to its allies that ‘rebalancing defence spending between the European nations and the US is more than ever a necessity’.⁴⁰ European members of NATO have long been required to reduce the gap with the US by equipping themselves with more capabilities, yet not until Libya did they realise the seriousness of the problem which might terminate the continuation of the transatlantic alliance: they were more or less surprised by the US first-ever apparent retreat. In fact, to maintain NATO requires the European states to ‘share the United States’ conception of a stable, sustainable international order, and be willing to devote resources to maintaining that order, even in situations in which their own immediate territorial security is not at risk’.⁴¹ Therefore, to ensure there would be equitable sharing of the defence burden, NATO introduced ‘Smart Defence’ at the 2012 Chicago Summit, which advocated ‘pooling and sharing resources, setting better

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Jordan Becker and Edmund Malesky (2014) ‘The Continent or the Grand Large? Atlanticism, Europeanism, and Transatlantic Burden Sharing’.

priorities and encouraging countries to specialise in things they are best at'.⁴² The 'Smart Defence' aimed to renew the culture of cooperation by adopting 'a new way of thinking about generating the modern defence capabilities the Alliance needs for the coming decade and beyond'.⁴³

The 'Smart Defence' initiative was inspired by the remarks of Gates who believed that NATO faced 'the real possibility (of) a dim, if not dismal future'.⁴⁴ Gates' prediction was based on the fact that European members were chronically underfunded in their defence apparatuses, and that Washington had to cut down its contribution to NATO's operating budget because of the economic pressure and the need for rebalancing military commitments to the Pacific. At that time, whether the US would reduce its defence budget by a wide margin was uncertain, but as the Libyan operation showed, it would probably 'do what it must—playing roles and providing surge capabilities that only it can provide' while asking Europe to 'bear the rest of the burden for operations that are more in its own interests than those of the United States'.⁴⁵ With respect to this, Smart Defence was basically intended to make European countries more responsible for their security as the US withdrew from the continent.⁴⁶ Ideally, Smart Defence would help solve or at least ease the tensions between Washington and European capitals over burden-sharing, whereas, it has not brought visible change so far.⁴⁷ European governments remained committed to deficit reduction, having their military spending slighted due to Europe's financial crisis.

⁴² 'NATO Announces Progress in Missile Shield, Smart Defence', *Xinhua News*, 21 May 2012.

⁴³ 'Smart Defence', *NATO*, 26 April 2012.

⁴⁴ Thom Shanker (2011) 'Defence Secretary Warns NATO of "Dim" Future', *The New York Times*, 10 June. 'Smart Defence and the Future of NATO: Can the Alliance Meet the Challenges of the Twenty-First Century', The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 28-30 March 2012, p. v.

⁴⁵ Barry Pavel and Jeff Lightfoot (2012) 'The Transatlantic Bargain after Gates', *Smart Defence and the Future of NATO: Can the Alliance Meet the Challenges of the Twenty-First Century?*, The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 28-30 March p. 67. Doug Stokes and Richard Whitman (2013) 'Transatlantic Triage? European and UK's Grand Strategy after the US Rebalance to Asia', *International Affairs*, Vol. 89, No. 5, pp. 1087-1107.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 67-70.

⁴⁷ Jordan Becker and Edmund Malesky believed NATO's 'Smart Defence' was well suited to capitalise on increasing near-term consensus on fiscal constraints, as well as the long-term convergence in strategic policy orientation. Thus, there was less cause to panic about burden sharing issues than often perceived and NATO might flourish during lean times. But their analysis was mainly based on the assumption that 'the European share of operational expenditures is actually increasing' and that 'the United States begins shifting expenditures away from defence in general', which was not the case. See Jordan Becker and Edmund Malesky (2014).

Skepticism of Smart Defence abounded. Francois Heibourg, chairman of the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) and the Geneva Centre for Security Policy, said that governments all too often chose jobs in defence companies at home over military logic. In addition to this structural trouble facing NATO, the idea of Smart Defence was uncomfortably hung over by Germany's noncooperation: 'the voters of the biggest and richest country in European NATO—Germany—are resistant to the use of force in almost any context'.⁴⁸ This raises the question of how seriously can the 'Smart Defence' be taken. Will the 'Smart Defence' make a real difference to the transatlantic cooperation, given the fact that the US was more eager to 'pivot' toward the Asia-Pacific region after a decade of war in the Middle East?

9.5.2 'Pivot to Asia'

At the EU-US Summit in November 2011, the transatlantic partners discussed ideas of a joint pivot to Asia and agreed to increase their 'dialogue on Asia-Pacific issues and coordinate activities'.⁴⁹ This, together with the 'Smart Defence', ideally would have helped strengthen transatlantic relations and, especially NATO. Yet in terms of declining defence budgets, many European countries regarded Asia as a 'region too far' and preferred to concentrate on their own backyard.⁵⁰ Europe's unwillingness to follow US steps pivoting to Asia did not affect US determination to increase its security focus on Asia. President Obama expressed his will of changing budget allocations, labelling himself as the 'Pacific President' who would take a decisive turn away from Europe.⁵¹ It was clear that Washington was attempting to reconceptualise the role of the US as to whether it should be a Pacific rather than European power.

The US 'Pivot to Asia' strategy came at a time when the US was over-committed internationally. Domestic arguments against US international military engagement continued after Afghanistan and Iraq. Libertarian Republicans who worried about the

⁴⁸ 'NATO's Sea of Troubles', *The Economist*, 31 March 2012.

⁴⁹ Rem Kortewer (2013) 'Europe Cannot Make Up Its Mind about the US Pivot', *Centre for European Reform*, 27 September.

⁵⁰ Christina Lin (2014) 'Cooperative Security with China and the Post-Arab Spring Mediterranean Security Architecture', *Liberal Order in a Post-Western World*, Washington: Transatlantic Academy, p. 123.

⁵¹ President Obama (2012) Remarks by the President on the Defence Strategic Review, 5 January. Freddy Gray (2013) 'The Pacific President', *The Spectator*, 19 January.

growing budget deficit, criticised costly military engagement. Traditional Democrats were concerned that too many international missions would drain resources for domestic social purposes.⁵² In response to these ‘misguided impulses’ that sought to scale down US international commitments in favour of domestic priorities, Hillary Clinton proposed a compelling answer: ‘We cannot afford not to.’⁵³ But her argument was based on the necessity of increasing American preoccupation with Pacific rather than European security. Therefore, even though it was certain that the US would not downsize its foreign engagement, it remained unclear whether the US would retain its commitment to the European security architecture. In terms of the fact that the US is overstretched around the world and frustrated with the economic crisis, and that European countries are still busy decreasing their defence budgets and nurturing skeptical public opinion on military participation in conflicts management, if the US has to retreat, it will of course retreat from Europe.

Thus, according to Trine Flockhart, ‘a transatlantic relationship built on the assumption of identical interests is no longer relevant’.⁵⁴ However, this does not mean that Europe is no longer important to the US. Washington and European capitals do share a perception of economic and security threats and ‘they share the perception of a need to safeguard their leading position as trading states in the international system, and they continue to share liberal values and to work closely together in a densely institutionalised manner’.⁵⁵ Furthermore, in terms of Obama’s recent foreign policy vision outlined on May 28, 2014, it seems that the US has refocused its attention on Europe: in addition to the remarkable claim that ‘America must always lead on the world stage’, Obama also emphasised the importance of mobilising allies and partners to take collective action, which sent a message to European countries in particular that the US would strengthen its cooperation with them in dealing with the Syrian and Ukrainian crises.⁵⁶ Moreover, Obama pledged a billion-dollar military programme of reinforcements in Europe in the wake of the Ukrainian crisis, reaffirming US

⁵² Josef Braml (2012) ‘NATO’s Inward Outlook: Global Burden Shifting’, *Smart Defence and the Future of NATO: Can the Alliance Meet the Challenges of the Twenty-First Century?*, The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 28-30 March, p. 19.

⁵³ Hillary Clinton (2011) ‘America’s Pacific Century’, *Foreign Policy*, 11 October.

⁵⁴ Trine Flockhart (2014) pp. 144-145.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

⁵⁶ Tom Cohen, Jim Acosta and Kevin Liptak (2014) ‘Obama Outlines Foreign Policy Vision of “Might and Right”’, *CNN*, 29 May.

commitment to Eastern Europe and showing US determination to ‘review its force presence in Europe in the light of the new security challenges on the continent’.⁵⁷ So far, the Air Force Aviation Detachment (Av-Det) in Poland has got a continuous US presence, with ten US Air Force members stationed at Lask Air Base.⁵⁸ This is certainly in conformity with the US promise to boost the military contingent in Europe, but the question remains as to how seriously can US commitment to Europe be taken, given that after all, Obama’s ‘European reassurance initiative’ was not about stationing US or NATO troops permanently in Poland or the Baltic states.⁵⁹ Whether Washington is truly ‘refocusing’ its attention on Europe is ambiguous, nonetheless US commitment to NATO is strengthened under current circumstances, regarding the need to show a strong response to Russia’s aggression.

But it is not easy to assure a positive outcome for a reinvigorated transatlantic relationship that is based on the future rather than the past. As Mark Webber *et al.* point out, the challenge to NATO’s persistence nowadays is whether it can service its two motors: its principle of purpose and its principle of function.⁶⁰ The Ukraine crisis has at least given NATO a purpose. But the good functioning of NATO has not been guaranteed, given that as a consequence of the Alliance’s operations ‘NATO is becoming solely dependent on the US nuclear guarantee’.⁶¹ Such a situation reinforces the burden-sharing argument that is again emerging.⁶² Therefore, most importantly, the inherent NATO problems should be tackled as soon as possible. For the US commitment to the Alliance, what NATO operations discovered was constantly similar: the most likely factor that might terminate US commitment to the Alliance comes from the inherent problem of burden-sharing which has remained unresolved since the establishment of NATO. And the problem will possibly be repeated in Ukraine again if NATO ultimately get involved, given that NATO members have already been in disagreement: ‘Germany is more circumspect about

⁵⁷ Ian Traynor (2014) ‘Obama Pledges \$1bn to Boost Military in Europe in Wake of Ukraine Crisis’, *The Guardian*, 3 June.

⁵⁸ ‘US Forces in Poland Strengthen NATO Partnerships During Aviation Rotation’, Spangdahlem Air Base, 3 June 2014.

⁵⁹ ‘Poland and America: Troops In’, *The Economist*, 7 June 2014.

⁶⁰ Mark Webber, Ellen Hallams and Martin Smith (2014) pp. 773-793.

⁶¹ Andrew Dorman (2012) ‘NATO’s 2012 Chicago Summit: A Chance to Ignore the Issues Once Again?’, *International Affairs*, Vol. 88, No. 2, p. 311.

⁶² David Yost (2009) ‘Assurance and US Extended Deterrence in NATO’, *International Affairs*, Vol. 85, No. 4, pp. 755-780.

sanctions against Russia, and wants NATO to keep to its 1997 agreement. France is at loggerheads with Poland (and America) over its plans to sell Russia two amphibious assault ships.⁶³ The Ukraine crisis has cast a light on many long-standing issues that need to be addressed if the Alliance is to be reinvigorated.⁶⁴ Some people might argue that the NATO problems had existed even before the 1990s and no serious consequence had been caused thus far. Yet the situation today is unprecedentedly complicated, which will probably bring an earthshaking change to the transatlantic relationship if it is not taken seriously. According to a recent Chatham House report by the NATO Group Policy Experts, European governments bear particular responsibility for ensuring their own territorial security, as ‘no amount of “smarter” defence will compensate for a failure to reverse falling defence spending’.⁶⁵ In short, with respect to the growing US preference for the ‘Pivot to Asia’ strategy and the declining function of the ‘Smart Defence’ resolution, it becomes certain that ‘unless something changes, NATO will end up just doing less with less’.⁶⁶

⁶³ Ibid. German decision-makers have grown increasingly reluctant to antagonise the country that provides them with energy. See Luca Ratti (2009) p. 418.

⁶⁴ Mark Webber, Ellen Hallams and Martin Smith (2014) pp. 792-793.

⁶⁵ Martin Butora, *et al.* (2014).

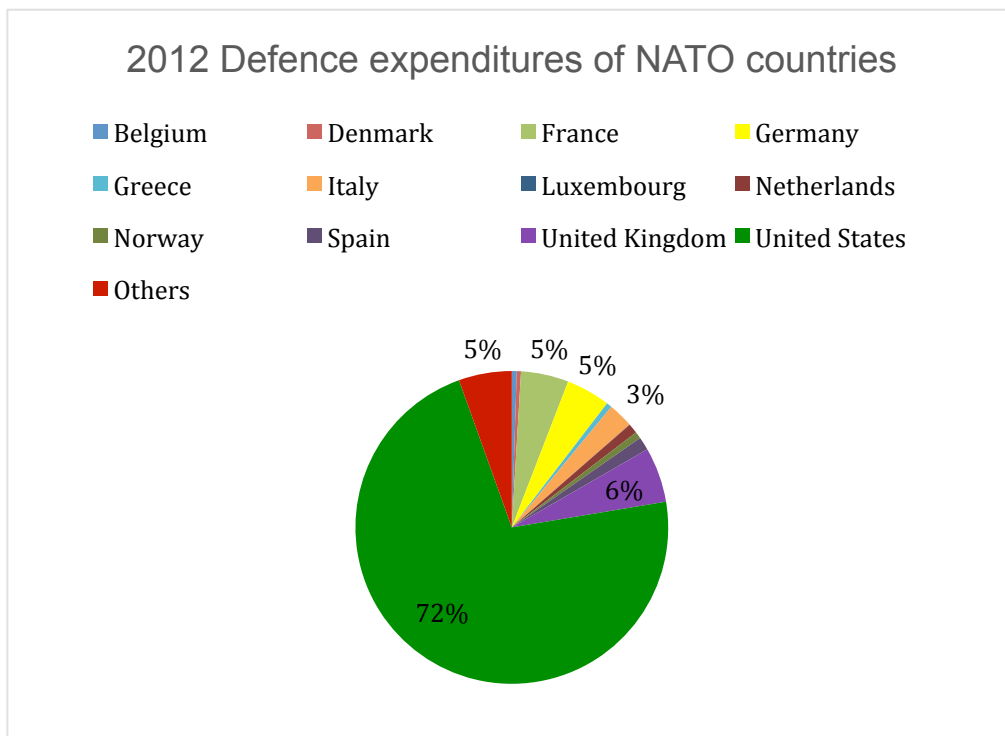
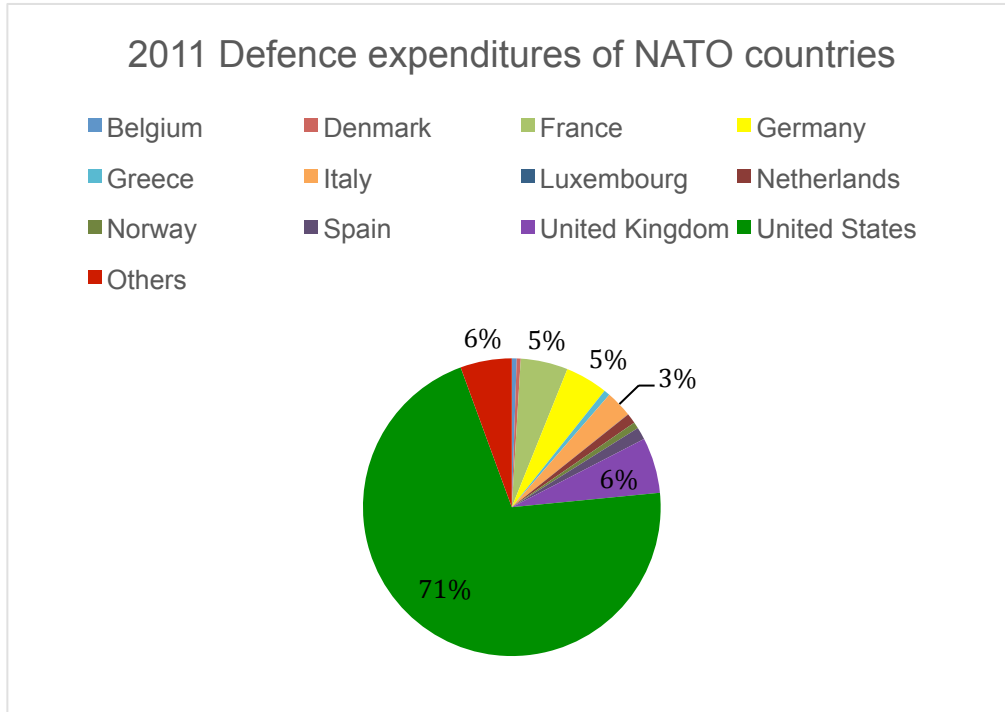
⁶⁶ ‘NATO’s Sea of Troubles’.

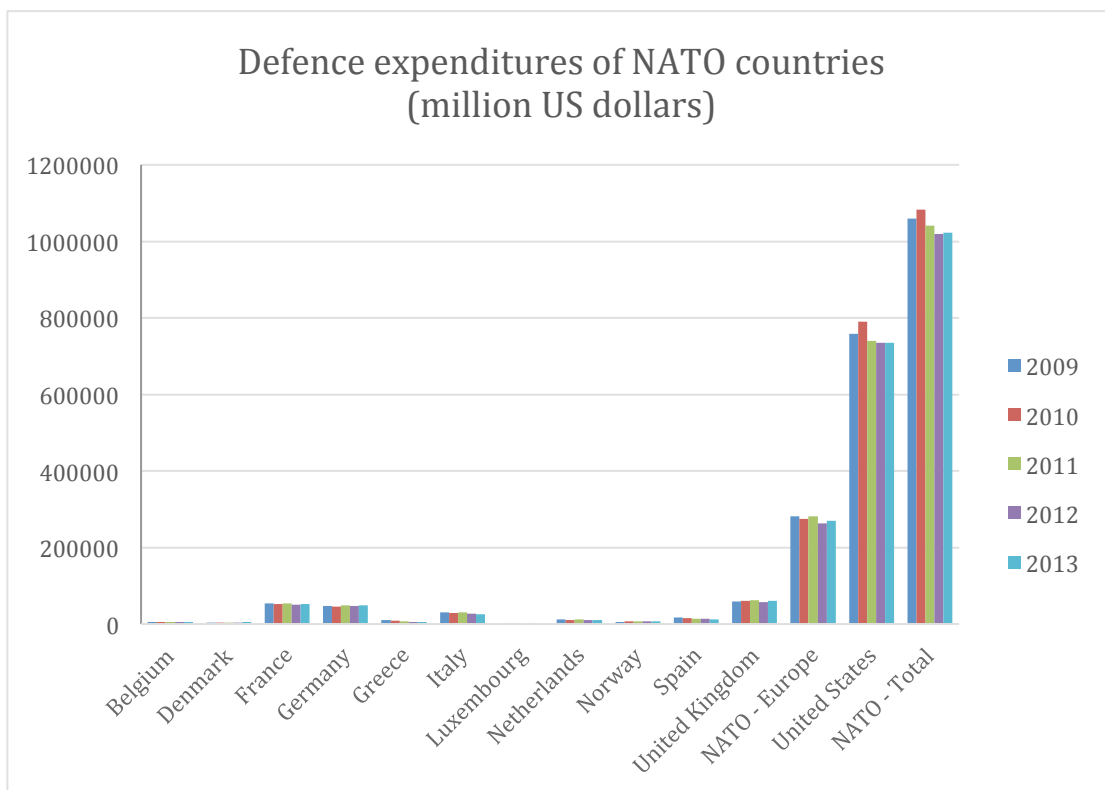
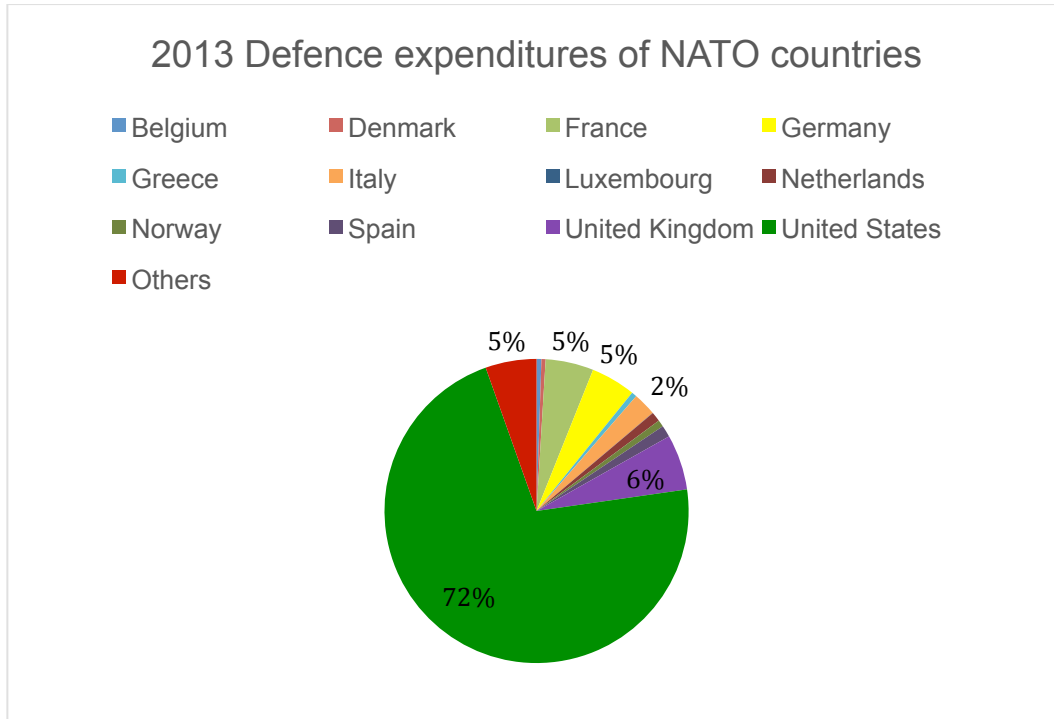
Appendix 1: Interviewees

Name	Institution	Interview Date	Interview Venue	Contact
Paula Newberg	Georgetown University	July 5 th , 2012	Saxbys Café (near the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, 1316 36 th Street NW, 20007)	pn67@georgetown.edu
Karim Mezran	The Atlantic Council	July 9 th , 2012	Office room 821, the Atlantic Council, 888 16 th Street NW	kmezran@acus.org
Robert Litwak	Woodrow Wilson Center	July 10 th , 2012	Office room, Woodrow Wilson Center, Ronald Reagan Building, Pennsylvania Avenue	robert.litwak@wilsoncenter.org
James M. Lindsay	Council on Foreign Relations	July 10 th , 2012	Office room, Council on Foreign Relations, 1777 F Street, NW, 20006	j Lindsay@cfr.org
Stephen Flanagan	Center for Strategic and International Studies	July 10 th , 2012	Office room, Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1800K Street, NW	sflanagan@csis.org
Robert J. Lieber	Georgetown University	July 11 th , 2012	Office room 664, Intercultural Center, Government Department, 20057-1034	lieberr@georgetown.edu
Francis Winters	Georgetown University	July 12 th , 2012	Galleria café, Intercultural Center, Georgetown University	wintersf@georgetown.edu
Steven Heydemann	US Institute of Peace	July 16 th , 2012	Office room, US Institute of Peace, 2301 Constitution Avenue, NW, 20037	sh267@georgetown.edu

Christopher Chivvis	RAND	July 16 th , 2012	Office room, RAND, 1200 South Hayes Street, Arlington, VA, 22202	chivvis@rand.org
Nora Bensahel	Center for a New American Security	July 16 th , 2012	Office Room 403, Center for a New American Security, 1301 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, 20004	nbensahel@cnas.org
Matthew Kroenig	Council on Foreign Relations	July 17 th , 2012	Office room, Council on Foreign Relations, 1777 F Street, NW, 20006	mkroenig@cfr.org
Charles Kupchan	Council on Foreign Relations	July 17 th , 2012	Office room, Council on Foreign Relations, 1777 F Street, NW, 20006	ckupchan@cfr.org
Kim Wincup	Center for Strategic and International Studies	July 18 th , 2012	Office room, Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1800K Street, NW	kwincup@csis.org
Kathleen Stephens	US Ambassador to South Korea	July 18 th , 2012	Office Room, 3619 O Street	Ks1156@georgetown.edu

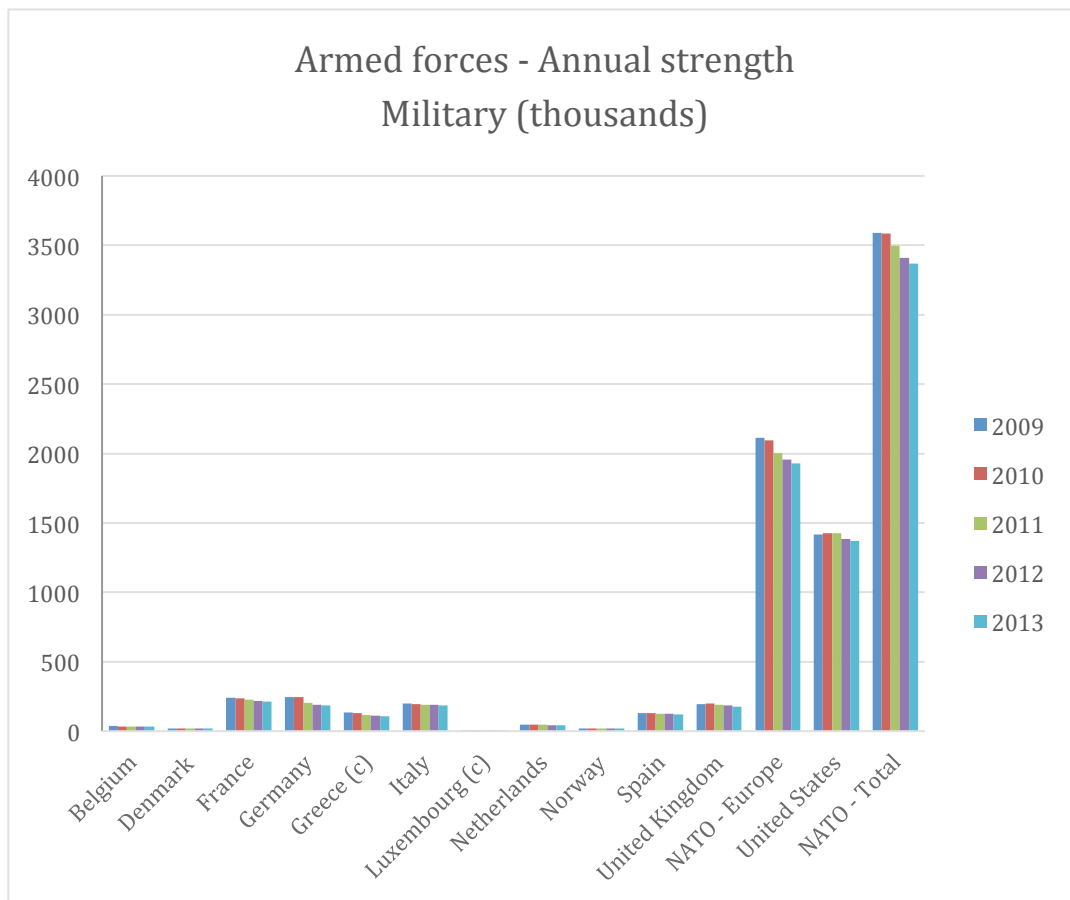
Appendix 2: Defence expenditures of NATO countries





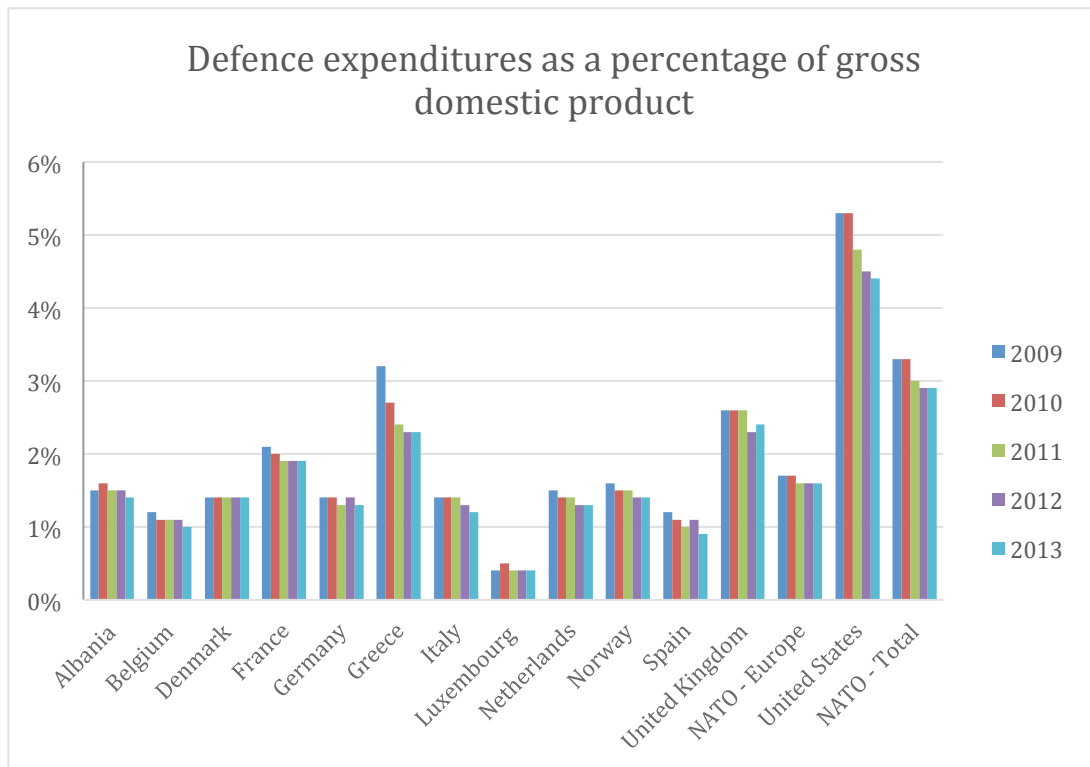
Note: graphs constructed from information obtained from 'Financial and Economic Data Relating to NATO Defence', NATO, 24 February 2014.

Appendix 3: Armed forces—annual strength



Note: graph constructed from information obtained from 'Financial and Economic Data Relating to NATO Defence', NATO, 24 February 2014.

Appendix 4: Defence expenditures as a percentage of gross domestic product



Note: graph constructed from information obtained from 'Financial and Economic Data Relating to NATO Defence', NATO, 24 February 2014.

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